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IVALMA RESCUING MOROK FROM THE PANTHER.

THE
WANDERING JEW

By EUGENE SUE

Complete Edition
IN ONE VOLUME

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THE WANDERING JEW.

PART FIRST.—THE TRANSGRESSION.

PROLOGUE.

THE LAND'S END OF TWO WORLDS.

THE Arctic Ocean encircles with a belt of eternal ice the desert confines of Siberia and North America—the uttermost limits of the Old and New worlds, separated by the narrow channel, known as Behring's Straits.

The last days of September have arrived.

The equinox has brought with it darkness and Northern storms, and night will quickly close the short and dismal polar day. The sky of a dull and leaden blue is faintly lighted by a sun without warmth, whose white disc, scarcely seen above the horizon, pales before the dazzling brilliancy of the snow that covers, as far as the eyes can reach, the boundless *steppes*.

To the North, this desert is bounded by a ragged coast, bristling with huge black rocks.

At the base of this Titanic mass lies enchained the petrified ocean, whose spell-bound waves appear fixed as vast ranges of ice mountains, their blue peaks fading away in the far-off frost smoke, or snow vapour.

Between the twin-peaks of Cape East, the termination of Siberia, the sullen sea is seen to drive tall icebergs across a streak of dead green. There lies Behring's Straits.

Opposite, and towering over the channel, rise the granite masses of Cape Prince of Wales, the headland of North America.

These lonely latitudes do not belong to the habitable world ; for the piercing cold shivers the stones, splits the trees, and causes the earth to burst asunder, which, throwing forth showers of icy spangles, seems capable of enduring this solitude of frost and tempest, of famine and death.

And yet, strange to say, foot-prints may be traced on the snow, covering these headlands on either side of Behring's Straits.

On the American shore, the footprints are small and light, thus betraying the passage of a woman.

She has been hastening up the rocky peak, whence the drifts of Siberia are visible.

On the latter ground, footprints larger and deeper betoken the passing of a man. He also was on his way to the Straits.

It would seem that this man and woman had arrived here from opposite directions, in hope of catching a glimpse of one another across the arm of the sea dividing the two worlds—the Old and the New.

More strange still ! the man and the woman have crossed the solitudes during a terrific storm ! Black pines, the growth of centuries, pointing their

bent heads in different parts of the solitude like crosses in a churchyard, have been uprooted, rent, and hurled aside by the blasts !

Yet the two travellers face this furious tempest, which has plucked up trees, and pounded the frozen masses into splinters, with the roar of thunder.

They face it, without for one single instant deviating from the straight line hitherto followed by them.

Who then are these two beings who advance thus calmly amidst the storms and convulsions of nature ?

Is it by chance, or design, or destiny, that the seven nails in the sole of the man's shoe form a cross—thus :



Everywhere he leaves this impress behind him.

On the smooth and polished snow, these footmarks seem imprinted by a foot of brass on a marble floor.

Night without twilight has soon succeeded day—a night of foreboding gloom.

The brilliant reflection of the snow renders the white steppes still visible beneath the azure darkness of the sky ; and the pale stars glimmer on the obscure and frozen dome.

Solemn silence reigns.

But, towards the Straits, a faint light appears.

At first, a gentle, bluish light, such as precedes moonrise ; it increases in brightness, and assumes a ruddy hue.

Darkness thickens in every other direction ; the white wilds of the desert are now scarcely visible under the black vault of the firmament.

Strange and confused noises are heard amidst this obscurity.

They sound like the flight of large night-birds—now flapping—now heavily skimming over the steppes—now descending.

But no cry is heard.

This silent terror heralds the approach of one of those imposing phenomena that awe alike the most ferocious and the most harmless of animated beings. An *Aurora Borealis* (magnificent sight !) common in the polar regions, suddenly beams forth.

A half circle of dazzling whiteness becomes visible in the horizon. Immense columns of light stream forth from this dazzling centre, rising to a great height, illuminating earth, sea, and sky. Then a brilliant reflection, like the blaze of a conflagration, steals over the snow of the desert, purples the summits of the mountains of ice, and imparts a dark red hue to the black rocks of both continents.

After attaining this magnificent brilliancy, the Northern Lights faded away gradually, and their vivid glow was lost in a luminous fog.

Just then, by a wondrous mirage, an effect very common in high latitudes, the American Coast, though separated from Siberia by a broad arm of the sea, loomed so close, that a bridge might seemingly be thrown from one world to the other.

Then human forms appeared in the transparent azure haze overspreading both forelands.

On the Siberian Cape, a man, on his knees, stretched his arms towards America, with an expression of inconceivable despair.

On the American promontory, a young and handsome woman replied to the man's despairing gesture by pointing to heaven.

For some seconds, these two tall figures stood out, pale and shadowy, in the farewell gleams of the Aurora.

But the fog thickens, and all is lost in darkness.

Whence came the two beings, who met thus amidst polar glaciers, at the extremities of the old and new worlds?

Who were the two creatures, brought near for a moment by a deceitful mirage, but who seemed eternally separated?

CHAPTER I.

MOROK.

THE month of October, 1831, draws to its close.

Though it is still day, a brass lamp, with four burners, illumines the cracked walls of a large loft, whose solitary window is closed against outer light. A ladder, with its top rungs coming up through an open trap, leads to it.

Here and there at random on the floor lie iron chains, spiked collars, saw-toothed snaffles, muzzles bristling with nails, and long iron rods set in wooden handles. In one corner stands a portable furnace, such as tinkers use to melt their spelter; charcoal and dry chips fill it, so that a spark would suffice to kindle this furnace in a minute.

Not far from this collection of ugly instruments, putting one in mind of a torturer's kit of tools, there are some articles of defence and offence of a bygone age. A coat of mail, with links so flexible, close, and light, that it resembled steel tissue, hangs from a box, beside iron cuishes and arm-pieces, in good condition, even to being properly fitted with straps. A mace, and two long three-corner-headed pikes, with ash handles, strong, and light at the same time, spotted with lately-shed blood, complete the armoury, modernized somewhat by the presence of two Tyrolese rifles, loaded and primed.

Along with this arsenal of murderous weapons and out-of-date instruments, is strangely mingled a collection of very different objects, being small glass-lidded boxes, full of rosaries, chaplets, medals, AGNUS DEI, holy-water bottles, framed pictures of saints, etc., not to forget a goodly number of those chap-books, struck off in Friburg on coarse bluish paper, in which you can hear about miracles of our own time, or 'Jesus Christ's Letter to a true believer,' containing awful predictions, as for the years 1831 and '32, about impious revolutionary France.

One of those canvas daubs, with which strolling showmen adorn their booths, hangs from a rafter, no doubt to prevent its being spoilt by too long rolling up. It bore the following legend:

'THE DOWNRIGHT TRUE AND MOST MEMORABLE CONVERSION OF IGNATIUS MOROK, KNOWN AS THE PROPHET, HAPPENING IN FRIBURG, 1828TH YEAR OF GRACE.'

This picture, of a size larger than natural, of gaudy colour, and in bad taste, is divided into three parts, each presenting an important phase in the life of the convert, surnamed 'The Prophet.' In the first, behold a long-bearded man, the hair almost white, with uncouth face, and clad in reindeer skin, like the Siberian savage. His black foreskin cap is topped with a raven's head; his features express terror. Bent forward in his sledge, which half-a-dozen huge tawny dogs draw over the snow, he is fleeing from the pursuit of a pack of foxes, wolves, and big bears, whose gaping jaws, and formidable teeth, seem quite capable of devouring man, sledge, and dogs, a hundred times over. Beneath this section, read:

'IN 1810, MOROK, THE IDOLATER, FLED FROM WILD BEASTS.'

In the second picture, Morok, decently clad in a catechumen's white gown,

kneels, with clasped hands, to a man who wears a white neckcloth, an flowing black robe. In a corner, a tall angel, of repulsive aspect holds a trumpet in one hand, and flourishes a flaming sword with the other, while the words which follow flow out of his mouth, in red letters on a black ground :

'MOROK, THE IDOLATER, FLED FROM WILD BEASTS; BUT WILD BEASTS WILL FLEE FROM IGNATIUS MOROK, CONVERTED AND BAPTIZED IN FRIBURG.'

Thus, in the last compartment, the new convert proudly, boastfully, and triumphantly parades himself in a flowing robe of blue; head up, left arm akimbo, right hand outstretched, he seems to scare the wits out of a multitude of lions, tigers, hyænas, and bears, who, with sheathed claws, and masked teeth, crouch at his feet, awestricken, and submissive.

Under this, is the concluding moral.

'IGNATIUS MOROK BEING CONVERTED, WILD BEASTS CROUCH BEFORE HIM.'

Not far from this canvas are several parcels of halfpenny books, likewise from the Friburg press, which relate by what an astounding miracle Morok, the Idolater, acquired a supernatural power almost divine, the moment he was converted—a power which the wildest animal could not resist, and which was testified to every day by the lion-tamer's performances, 'given less to display his courage than to show his praise unto the Lord.'

Through the trap-door which opens into the loft, reek up puffs of a rank, sour, penetrating odour. From time to time are heard sonorous growls and deep breathings, followed by a dull sound, as of great bodies stretching themselves heavily along the floor.

A man is alone in this loft. It is Morok, the tamer of wild beasts, surnamed the Prophet.

He is forty years old, of middle height, with lank limbs, and an exceedingly spare frame; he is wrapped in a long, blood-red pelisse, lined with black fur; his complexion, fair by nature, is bronzed by the wandering life he has led from childhood; his hair, of that dead yellow peculiar to certain races of the Polar countries, falls straight and stiff down his shoulders; and his thin, sharp, hooked nose, and prominent cheek-bones, surmount a long beard, bleached almost to whiteness. Peculiarly marking the physiognomy of this man is the wide-open eye, with its tawny pupil ever encircled by a rim of white. This fixed, extraordinary look, exercises a real fascination over animals—which, however, does not prevent the Prophet from also employing, to tame them, the terrible arsenal around him.

Seated at a table, he has just opened the false bottom of a box, filled with chaplets and other toys, for the use of the devout. Beneath this false bottom, secured by a secret lock, are several sealed envelopes, with no other address than a number, combined with a letter of the alphabet. The Prophet takes one of these packets, conceals it in the pocket of his pelisse, and, closing the secret fastening of the false bottom, replaces the box upon a shelf.

This scene occurs about four o'clock in the afternoon, in the White Falcon, the only hostelry in the little village of Mockern, situated near Leipsic, as you come from the north towards France.

After a few moments, the loft is shaken by a hoarse roaring from below.

'Judas! be quiet!' exclaims the Prophet, in a menacing tone, as he turns his head towards the trap-door.

Another deep growl is heard, formidable as distant thunder.

'Lie down, Cain!' cries Morok, starting from his seat.

A third roar, of inexpressible ferocity, bursts suddenly on the ear.

'Death! will you have done?' cries the Prophet, rushing towards the trap-door, and addressing a third invisible animal, which bears this ghastly name.

Notwithstanding the habitual authority of his voice—notwithstanding his

reiterated threats—the brute-tamer cannot obtain silence; on the contrary, the barking of several dogs is soon added to the roaring of the wild beasts. Morok seizes a pike, and approaches the ladder; he is about to descend, when he sees some one issuing from the aperture.

The new comer has a brown, sun-burnt face; he wears a grey hat, bell-crowned and broad-brimmed, with a short jacket, and wide trousers of green cloth; his dusty leathern gaiters show that he has walked some distance; a game-bag is fastened by straps to his back.

'The devil take the brutes!' cried he, as he set foot on the floor; 'one would think they'd forgotten me in three days. Judas thrust his paw through the bars of his cage, and Death danced like a fury. They don't know me any more, it seems?'

This was said in German. Morok answered in the same language, but with a slightly foreign accent.

'Good or bad news, Karl?' he inquired, with some uneasiness.

'Good news.'

'You've met them?'

'Yesterday; two leagues from Wittenberg.'

'Heaven be praised!' cried Morok, clasping his hands with intense satisfaction.

'Oh, of course, 'tis the direct road from Russia to France, 'twas a thousand to one that we should find them somewhere between Wittenberg and Leipsic.'

'And the description?'

'Very close: two young girls in mourning; horse, white; the old man has long moustache, blue forage-cap, grey top-coat, and a Siberian dog at his heels.'

'And where did you leave them?'

'A league hence. They will be here within the hour.'

'And in this inn—since it is the only one in the village,' said Morok, with a pensive air.

'And night drawing on,' added Karl.

'Did you get the old man to talk?'

'Him!—you don't suppose it?'

'Why not?'

'Go, and try yourself.'

'And for what reason?'

'Impossible.'

'Impossible—why?'

'You shall know all about it. Yesterday, as if I had fallen in with them by chance, I followed them to the place where they stopped for the night. I spoke in German to the tall old man, accosting him, as is usual with wayfarers, "*Good day, and a pleasant journey, comrade!*" But, for an answer, he looked askant at me, and pointed with the end of his stick to the other side of the road.'

'He is a Frenchman, and, perhaps, does not understand German.'

'He speaks it, at least, as well as you; for at the inn I heard him ask the host for whatever he and the young girls wanted.'

'And did you not again attempt to engage him in conversation?'

'Once only; but I met with such a rough reception, that, for fear of making mischief, I did not try again. Besides, between ourselves, I can tell you this man has a devilish ugly look; believe me, in spite of his grey moustache, he looks so vigorous and resolute, though with no more flesh on him than a carcass, that I don't know whether he or my mate Giant Goliath, would have the best of it in a struggle. I know not your plans: only take care, master—take care!'

'My black panther of Java was also very vigorous and very vicious,' said Morok, with a grim, disdainful smile.

‘What, Death? Yes, in truth; and she is vigorous and vicious as ever. Only to you she is almost mild.’

‘And thus I will break in this tall old man, notwithstanding his strength and surliness.’

‘Humph! humph! be on your guard, master. You are clever: you are as brave as any one; but, believe me, you will never make a lamb out of the old wolf that will be here presently.’

‘Does not my lion, Cain—does not my tiger, Judas, crouch in terror before me?’

‘Yes, I believe you there—because you have means—’

‘Because I have *faith*: that is all—and it *is* all,’ said Morok, imperiously interrupting Karl, and accompanying these words with such a look, that the other hung his head and was silent.

‘Why should not he whom the Lord upholds in his struggle with wild beasts, be also upheld in his struggle with men, when those men are perverse and impious?’ added the Prophet, with a triumphant, inspired air.

Whether from belief in his master’s conviction, or from inability to engage in a controversy with him on so delicate a subject, Karl answered the Prophet, humbly: ‘You are wiser than I am, master; what you do must be well done.’

‘Did you follow this old man and these two young girls all day long?’ resumed the Prophet, after a moment’s silence.

‘Yes; but at a distance. As I know the country well, I sometimes cut across a valley, sometimes over a hill, keeping my eye upon the road, where they were always to be seen. The last time I saw them, I was hid behind the water-mill by the potteries. As they were on the highway for this place, and night was drawing on, I quickened my pace to get here before them, and be the bearer of what you call good news.’

‘Very good—yes—very good: and you shall be rewarded; for if these people had escaped me—’

The Prophet started, and did not conclude the sentence. The expression of his face, and the tones of his voice, indicated the importance of the intelligence which had just been brought him.

‘In truth,’ rejoined Karl, ‘it may be worth attending to; for that Russian courier, all plastered with lace, who came, without slacking bridle, from St. Petersburg to Leipsic, only to see you, rode so fast, perhaps, for the purpose—’

Morok abruptly interrupted Karl, and said:

‘Who told you that the arrival of the courier had anything to do with these travellers? You are mistaken; you should only know what I choose to tell you.’

‘Well, master, forgive me, and let’s say no more about it. So! I will get rid of my game-bag, and go help Goliath to feed the brutes, for their supper time draws near, if it is not already past. Does our big giant grow lazy, master?’

‘Goliath is gone out; he must not know that you are returned; above all, the tall old man and the maidens must not see you here—it would make them suspect something.’

‘Where do you wish me to go, then?’

‘Into the loft, at the end of the stable, and wait my orders; you may this night have to set out for Leipsic.’

‘As you please; I have some provisions left in my pouch, and can sup in the loft whilst I rest myself.’

‘Go.’

‘Master, remember what I told you. Beware of that old fellow with the grey moustache; I think he’s devilish tough; I’m up to these things—he’s an ugly customer—be on your guard!’

'Be quite easy ! I am always on my guard,' said Morok.

'Then good luck to you, master !'—and Karl, having reached the ladder, suddenly disappeared.

After making a friendly farewell gesture to his servant, the Prophet walked up and down for some time, with an air of deep meditation ; then, approaching the box which contained the papers, he took out a pretty long letter, and read it over and over with profound attention. From time to time, he rose and went to the closed window, which looked upon the inner court of the inn, and appeared to listen anxiously ; for he waited with impatience the arrival of the three persons whose approach had just been announced to him.

CHAPTER II.

THE TRAVELLERS.

WHILE the above scene was passing in the White Falcon at Mockern, the three persons whose arrival Morok was so anxiously expecting, travelled on leisurely in the midst of smiling meadows, bounded on one side by a river, the current of which turned a mill ; and on the other by the highway leading to the village, which was situated on an eminence, at about a league's distance.

The sky was beautifully serene ; the bubbling of the river, beaten by the mill-wheel and sparkling with foam, alone broke upon the silence of an evening profoundly calm. Thick willows, bending over the river, covered it with their green transparent shadow ; whilst, further on, the stream reflected so splendidly the blue heavens and the glowing tints of the west, that, but for the hills which rose between it and the sky, the gold and azure of the water would have mingled in one dazzling sheet with the gold and azure of the firmament. The tall reeds on the bank bent their black velvet heads beneath the light breath of the breeze that rises at the close of day—for the sun was gradually sinking behind a broad streak of purple clouds, fringed with fire. The tinkling bells of a flock of sheep sounded from afar in the clear and sonorous air.

Along a path trodden in the grass of the meadow, two girls, almost children—for they had but just completed their fifteenth year—were riding on a white horse of medium size, seated upon a large saddle with a back to it, which easily took them both in, for their figures were slight and delicate.

A man of tall stature, with a sun-burnt face, and long grey moustache, was leading the horse by the bridle, and ever and anon turned towards the girls, with an air of solicitude at once respectful and paternal. He leaned upon a long staff ; his still robust shoulders carried a soldier's knapsack ; his dusty shoes, and step that began to drag a little, showed that he had walked a long way.

One of those dogs which the tribes of Northern Siberia harness to their sledges—a sturdy animal, nearly of the size, form, and hairy coat of the wolf—followed closely in the steps of the leader of this little caravan, never quitting, as it is commonly said, the heels of his master.

Nothing could be more charming than the group formed by the girls. One held with her left hand the flowing reins, and with her right encircled the waist of her sleeping sister, whose head reposed on her shoulder. Each step of the horse gave a graceful swaying to these pliant forms, and swung their little feet, which rested on a wooden ledge in lieu of a stirrup.

These twin sisters, by a sweet maternal caprice, had been called Rose and Blanche ; they were now orphans, as might be seen by their sad mourning vestments, already much worn. Extremely like in feature, and of the same size, it was necessary to be in the constant habit of seeing them, to distinguish one from the other. The portrait of her who slept not, might serve then for both of them ; the only difference at the moment being, that Rose was awake.

and discharging for that day the duties of elder sister—duties thus divided between them, according to the fancy of their guide, who, being an old soldier of the empire, and a martinet, had judged fit thus to alternate obedience and command between the orphans.

Greuze would have been inspired by the sight of those sweet faces, coiled in close caps of black velvet, from beneath which strayed a profusion of thick ringlets of a light chestnut colour, floating down their necks and shoulders, and setting, as in a frame, their round, firm, rosy, satin-like cheeks. A carnation, bathed in dew, is of no richer softness than their blooming lips; the wood violet's tender blue would appear dark beside the limpid azure of their large eyes, in which are depicted the sweetness of their characters, and the innocence of their age; a pure and white forehead, small nose, dimpled chin, complete these graceful countenances, which present a delightful blending of candour and gentleness.

You should have seen them too, when, on the threatening of rain or storm, the old soldier carefully wrapped them both in a large pelisse of rein-deer fur, and pulled over their heads the ample hood of this impervious garment; then nothing could be more lovely than those fresh and smiling little faces, sheltered beneath the dark-coloured cowl.

But now the evening was fine and calm; the heavy cloak hung in folds about the knees of the sisters, and the hood rested on the back of their saddle.

Rose, still encircling with her right arm the waist of her sleeping sister, contemplated her with an expression of ineffable tenderness, akin to maternal; for Rose was the eldest for the day, and an elder sister is almost a mother.

Not only did the orphans idolize each other; but, by a psychological phenomenon, frequent with twins, they were almost always simultaneously affected; the emotion of one was reflected instantly in the countenance of the other; the same cause would make both of them start or blush, so closely did their young hearts beat in unison; all ingenuous joys, all bitter griefs, were mutually felt, and shared in a moment between them.

In their infancy, simultaneously attacked by a severe illness, like two flowers on the same stem, they had drooped, grown pale, and languished together; but together also had they again found the pure, fresh hues of health.

Need it be said, that those mysterious, indissoluble links which united the twins, could not have been broken without striking a mortal blow at the existence of the poor children?

Thus the sweet birds called love-birds, only living in pairs, as if endowed with a common life, pine, despond, and die, when parted by a barbarous hand.

The guide of the orphans, a man of about fifty-five, distinguished by his military air and gait, preserved the immortal type of the warriors of the republic and the empire—some heroic of the people, who became, in one campaign, the first soldiers in the world—to prove what the people can do, have done, and will renew, when the rulers of their choice place in them confidence, strength, and their hope.

This soldier, guide of the sisters, and formerly a horse-grenadier of the Imperial Guard, had been nicknamed Dagobert. His grave, stern countenance was strongly marked; his long, grey, and thick moustache completely concealed his upper lip, and united with a large imperial, which almost covered his chin; his meagre cheeks, brick coloured, and tanned as parchment, were carefully shaven; thick eye-brows, still black, overhung and shaded his light blue eyes; gold ear-rings reached down to his white-edged military stock; his top-coat, of coarse grey cloth, was confined at the waist by a leathern belt; and a blue foraging cap, with a red tuft falling on his left shoulder, covered his bald head.

lion—kind and patient, because he was courageous and strong—Dagobert, notwithstanding his rough exterior, evinced for his orphan charges an exquisite solicitude, a watchful kindness, and a tenderness almost maternal. Yes, motherly ; for the heroism of affection dwells alike in the mother's heart and the soldier's.

Stoically calm, and repressing all emotion, the unchangeable coolness of Dagobert never failed him ; and, though few were less given to diollery, he was now and then highly comic, by reason of the imperturbable gravity with which he did everything.

From time to time, as they journeyed on, Dagobert would turn to bestow a caress or friendly word on the good white horse upon which the orphans were mounted. Its furrowed sides and long teeth betrayed a venerable age. Two deep scars, one on the flank and the other on the chest, proved that his horse had been present in hot battles ; nor was it without an act of pride that he sometimes shook his old military bridle, the brass stud of which was still adorned with an embossed eagle. His pace was regular, careful, and steady ; his coat sleek, and his bulk moderate ; the abundant foam, which covered his bit, bore witness to that health which horses acquire by the constant, but not excessive, labour of a long journey, performed by short stages. Although he had been more than six months on the road, this excellent animal carried the orphans, with a tolerably heavy portmanteau fastened to the saddle, as freely as on the day they started.

If we have spoken of the excessive length of the horse's teeth—the unquestionable evidence of great age—it is chiefly because he often displayed them, for the sole purpose of acting up to his name (he was called *Jovial*), by playing a mischievous trick, of which the dog was the victim.

This latter, who, doubtless for the sake of contrast, was called Spoil-sport (*Rabat-joié*), being always at his master's heels, found himself within the reach of Jovial, who from time to time nipped him delicately by the nape of the neck, lifted him from the ground, and carried him thus for a moment. The dog, protected by his thick coat, and no doubt long accustomed to the practical jokes of his companion, submitted to all this with stoical complacency ; save that, when he thought the jest had lasted long enough, he would turn his head and growl. Jovial understood him at the first hint, and hastened to set him down again. At other times, just to avoid monotony, Jovial would gently bite the knapsack of the soldier, who seemed, as well as the dog, to be perfectly accustomed to his pleasantries.

These details will give a notion of the excellent understanding that existed between the twin sisters, the old soldier, the horse, and the dog.

The little caravan proceeded on its way, anxious to reach, before night, the village of Mockern, which was now visible on the summit of a hill. Ever and anon, Dagobert looked around him, and seemed to be gathering up old recollections ; by degrees, his countenance became clouded, and when he was at a little distance from the mill, the noise of which had arrested his attention, he stopped, and drew his long moustache several times between his finger and thumb, the only sign which revealed in him any strong and concentrated feeling.

Jovial, having stopped short behind his master, Blanche, awaked suddenly by the shock, raised her head ; her first look sought her sister, on whom she smiled sweetly ; then both exchanged glances of surprise, on seeing Dagobert motionless, with his hands clasped and resting on his long staff, apparently affected by some painful and deep emotion.

The orphans just chanced to be at the foot of a little mound, the summit of which was buried in the thick foliage of a huge oak, planted half way down the slope. Perceiving that Dagobert continued motionless and absorbed in thought,

Rose leaned over her saddle, and, placing her little white hand on the shoulder of their guide, whose back was turned towards her, said to him, in a soft voice : 'Whatever is the matter with you, Dagobert ?'

The veteran turned ; to the great astonishment of the sisters, they perceived a large tear, which traced its humid furrow down his tanned cheek, and lost itself in his thick moustache.

'You weeping—*you*!' cried Rose and Blanche together, deeply moved. 'Tell us, we beseech, what is the matter ?'

After a moment's hesitation, the soldier brushed his horny hand across his eyes, and said to the orphans in a faltering voice, whilst he pointed to the old oak beside them : 'I shall make you sad, my poor children : and yet what I'm going to tell you has something sacred in it. Well, eighteen years ago, on the eve of the great battle of Leipsic, I carried your father to this very tree. He had two sabre-cuts on the head, a musket-ball in his shoulder ; and it was here that he and I—who had got two thrusts of a lance for my share—were taken prisoners ; and by whom, worse luck ?—why, a renegade ! By a Frenchman—an *émigrant* marquis, then colonel in the service of Russia—and who afterwards—but one day you shall know all.'

The veteran paused ; then, pointing with his staff to the village of Mockern, he added : 'Yes, yes, I can recognise the spot. Yonder are the heights where your brave father—who commanded us and the Poles of the Guard—overthrew the Russian Cuirassiers, after having carried the battery. Ah, my children !' continued the soldier, with the utmost simplicity, 'I wish you had seen your brave father, at the head of our brigade of horse, rushing on in a desperate charge in the thick of a shower of shells !—there was nothing like it—not a soul so grand as he !'

Whilst Dagobert thus expressed, in his own way, his regrets and recollections, the two orphans—by a spontaneous movement, glided gently from the horse, and holding each other by the hand, went together to kneel at the foot of the old oak. And there, closely pressed in each other's arms, they began to weep ; whilst the soldier, standing behind them, with his hands crossed on his long staff, rested his bald front upon it.

'Come, come, you must not fret,' said he softly, when, after a pause of a few minutes, he saw tears run down the blooming cheeks of Rose and Blanche, still on their knees. 'Perhaps we may find General Simon in Paris,' added he ; 'I will explain all that to you this evening at the inn. I purposely waited for this day, to tell you many things about your father ; it was an idea of mine, because this day is a sort of anniversary.'

'We weep because we think also of our mother,' said Rose.

'Of our mother, whom we shall only see again in heaven,' added Blanche.

The soldier raised the orphans, took each by the hand, and gazing from one to the other with ineffable affection, rendered still the more touching by the contrast of his rude features, 'You must not give way thus, my children,' said he ; 'it is true your mother was the best of women. When she lived in Poland, they called her the *Pearl of Warsaw*—it ought to have been the Pearl of the Whole World—for in the whole world you could not have found her match. No—no !'

The voice of Dagobert faltered ; he paused, and drew his long grey moustache between finger and thumb, as was his habit. 'Listen, my girls,' he resumed, when he had mastered his emotion ; 'your mother could give you none but the best advice, eh ?'

'Yes, Dagobert.'

'Well, what instructions did she give you before she died ? To think often of her, but without grieving ?'

'It is true ; she told us that our Father in heaven, always good to poor

mothers whose children are left on earth, would permit her to hear us from above,' said Blanche.

'And that her eyes would be ever fixed upon us,' added Rose.

And the two, by a spontaneous impulse, replete with the most touching grace, joined hands, raised their innocent looks to heaven, and exclaimed, with that beautiful faith natural to their age: 'Is it not so, mother?—thou seest us?—thou hearest us?'

'Since your mother sees and hears you,' said Dagobert, much moved, 'do not grieve her by fretting. She forbade you to do so.'

'You are right, Dagobert. We will not cry any more.'—And the orphans dried their eyes.

Dagobert, in the opinion of the devout, would have passed for a very heathen. In Spain, he had found pleasure in cutting down those monks of all orders and colours, who, bearing crucifix in one hand, and poniard in the other, fought *not* for liberty—the Inquisition had strangled *her* centuries ago—but for their monstrous privileges. Yet, in forty years, Dagobert had witnessed so many sublime and awful scenes—he had been so many times face to face with death—that the instinct of *natural religion*, common to every simple, honest heart, had always remained uppermost in his soul. Therefore, though he did not share in the consoling faith of the two sisters, he would have held as criminal any attempt to weaken its influence.

Seeing them less downcast, he thus resumed: 'That's right, my pretty ones: I prefer to hear you chat as you did this morning and yesterday—laughing at times, and answering me when I speak, instead of being so much engrossed with your own talk. Yes, yes, my little ladies! you seem to have had famous secrets together these last two days—so much the better, if it amuses you.'

The sisters coloured, and exchanged a subdued smile, which contrasted with the tears that yet filled their eyes, and Rose said to the soldier, with a little embarrassment, 'No, I assure you, Dagobert, we talk of nothing in particular.'

'Well, well, I don't wish to know it. Come, rest yourselves, a few moments more, and then we must start again; for it grows late, and we have to reach Mockern before night, so that we may be early on the road to-morrow.'

'Have we still a long, long way to go?' asked Rose.

'What, to reach Paris? Yes, my children; some hundred days' march. We don't travel quick, but we get on; and we travel cheap, because we have a light purse. A closet for you, a straw mattress and a blanket at your door for me, with Spoil-sport on my feet, and a clean litter for old Jovial, these are our whole travelling expenses. I say nothing about food, because you two together don't eat more than a mouse, and I have learnt in Egypt and Spain to be hungry only when it suits.'

'Not forgetting that, to save still more, you do all the cooking for us, and will not even let us assist.'

'And to think, good Dagobert, that you wash almost every evening at our resting-place. As if it were not for us to—'

'You!' said the soldier, interrupting Blanche, 'I allow you to chap your pretty little hands in soap-suds! Pooh! don't a soldier on a campaign always wash his own linen? Clumsy as you see me, I was the best washerwoman in my squadron—and what a hand at ironing! Not to make a brag of it.'

'Yes, yes—you can iron well—very well.'

'Only sometimes, there will be a little singe,' said Rose, smiling.

'Hah! when the iron is too hot. Zounds! I may bring it as near my cheek as I please; my skin is so tough that I don't feel the heat,' said Dagobert, with imperturbable gravity.

'We are only jesting, good Dagobert.'

'Then, children, if you think that I know my trade as a washerwoman, let

me continue to have your custom : it is cheaper ; and, on a journey, poor people like us should save where we can, for we must, at all events, keep enough to reach Paris. Once there, our papers and the medal you wear will do the rest—I hope so, at least.’

‘This medal is sacred to us ; mother gave it to us on her death-bed.’

‘Therefore, take great care that you do not lose it : see, from time to time, that you have it safe.’

‘Here it is,’ said Blanche, as she drew from her bosom a small bronze medal, which she wore suspended from her neck by a chain of the same material. The medal bore on its faces the following inscriptions :

VICTIM
of
L. C. D. J.
Pray for me !

PARIS,
February the 13th, 1682.

AT PARIS,
No. 3, Rue Saint François.
In a century and a half
you will be.
February the 13th, 1832.

PRAY FOR ME !

‘What does it mean, Dagobert?’ resumed Blanche, as she examined the mournful inscriptions. ‘Mother was not able to tell us.’

‘We will discuss all that this evening, at the place where we sleep,’ answered Dagobert. ‘It grows late : let us be moving. Put up the medal carefully, and away !—We have yet nearly an hour’s march to arrive at quarters. Come, my poor pets, once more look at the mound where your brave father fell—and then—to horse ! to horse !’

The orphans gave a last pious glance at the spot which had recalled to their guide such painful recollections, and, with his aid, remounted Jovial.

This venerable animal had not for one moment dreamed of moving ; but, with the consummate forethought of a veteran, he had made the best use of his time, by taking from that foreign soil a large contribution of green and tender grass, before the somewhat envious eyes of Spoil-sport, who had comfortably established himself in the meadow, with his snout protruding between his fore-paws. On the signal of departure, the dog resumed his post behind his master, and Dagobert, trying the ground with the end of his long staff, led the horse carefully along by the bridle, for the meadow was growing more and more marshy ; indeed, after advancing a few steps, he was obliged to turn off to the left, in order to regain the high road.

On reaching Mockern, Dagobert asked for the least expensive inn, and was told there was only one in the village—the White Falcon.

‘Let us go then to the White Falcon,’ observed the soldier.

CHAPTER III.

THE ARRIVAL.

ALREADY had Morok several times opened with impatience the window-shutter of the loft, to look out upon the inn-yard, watching for the arrival of the orphans and the soldier. Not seeing them, he began once more to walk slowly up and down, with his head bent forward, and his arms folded on his bosom, meditating on the best means to carry out the plan he had conceived. The ideas which possessed his mind, were, doubtless, of a painful character, for his countenance grew even more gloomy than usual.

Notwithstanding his ferocious appearance, he was by no means deficient in intelligence. The courage displayed in his taming exercises (which he gravely

attributed to his recent conversion), a solemn and mystical style of speech, and a hypocritical affectation of austerity, had given him a species of influence over the people he visited in his travels. Long before his conversion, as may well be supposed, Morok had been familiar with the habits of wild beasts. In fact, born in the north of Siberia, he had been, from his boyhood, one of the boldest hunters of bears and reindeer; later, in 1810, he had abandoned this profession, to serve as guide to a Russian engineer, who was charged with an exploring expedition to the Polar regions. He afterwards followed him to St. Petersburg, and there, after some vicissitudes of fortune, Morok became one of the imperial couriers—those iron *automata*, that the least caprice of the despot hurls in a frail sledge through the immensity of the empire, from Persia to the Frozen Sea. For these men, who travel night and day, with the rapidity of lightning, there are neither seasons nor, obstacles, fatigues nor dangers; living projectiles, they must either be broken to pieces, or reach the intended mark. One may conceive the boldness, the vigour, and the resignation, of men accustomed to such a life.

It is useless to relate here, by what series of singular circumstances Morok was induced to exchange this rough pursuit for another profession, and at last to enter, as catechumen, a religious house at Friburg; after which, being duly and properly converted, he began his nomadic excursions, with his menagerie of unknown origin.

* * * * *

Morok continued to walk up and down the loft. Night had come. The three persons whose arrival he so impatiently expected had not yet made their appearance. His walk became more and more nervous and irregular.

On a sudden he stopped abruptly, leaned his head towards the window, and listened. His ear was quick as a savage's.

'They are here!' he exclaimed, and his fox-like eye shone with diabolic joy. He had caught the sound of footsteps—a man's and a horse's. Hastening to the window-shutter of the loft, he opened it cautiously, and saw the two young girls on horseback, and the old soldier who served them as a guide, enter the inn-yard together.

The night had set in, dark and cloudy; a high wind made the lights flicker in the lanterns which were used to receive the new guests. But the description given to Morok had been so exact, that it was impossible to mistake them. Sure of his prey, he closed the window.

Having remained in meditation for another quarter of an hour—for the purpose, no doubt, of thoroughly digesting his projects—he leaned over the aperture from which projected the ladder, and called, 'Goliath!'

'Master!' replied a hoarse voice.

'Come up to me.'

'Here I am—just come from the slaughter-house with the meat.'

The steps of the ladder creaked as an enormous head appeared on a level with the floor. The new comer, who was more than six feet high, and gifted with herculean proportions, had been well named Goliath. He was hideous. His squinting eyes were deep set beneath a low and projecting forehead; his reddish hair and beard, thick and coarse as horse-hair, gave his features a stamp of bestial ferocity; between his broad jaws, armed with teeth which resembled fangs, he held by one corner a piece of raw beef weighing ten or twelve pounds, finding it, no doubt, easier to carry in that fashion, whilst he used his hands to ascend the ladder, which bent beneath his weight.

At length the whole of this tall and huge body issued from the aperture. Judging by his bull-neck, the astonishing breadth of his chest and shoulders, and the vast bulk of his arms and legs, this giant need not have feared to wrestle single-handed with a bear. He wore an old pair of blue trousers with

red stripes, faced with tanned sheep's-skin, and a vest, or rather cuirass, of thick leather, which was here and there slashed by the sharp claws of the animals.

When he was fairly on the floor, Goliath unclasped his fangs, opened his mouth, and let fall the great piece of beef, licking his blood-stained lips with greediness. Like many other mountebanks, this species of monster had begun by eating raw meat at fairs for the amusement of the public. Thence having gradually acquired a taste for this barbarous food, and uniting pleasure with profit, he engaged himself to perform the prelude to the exercises of Morok, by devouring, in the presence of the crowd, several pounds of raw flesh.

'My share and Death's are below stairs, and here are those of Cain and Judas,' said Goliath, pointing to the chunk of beef. 'Where is the cleaver, that I may cut it in two?—No preference here—beast or man—every gullet must have its own.'

Then, rolling up one of the sleeves of his vest, he exhibited a fore-arm hairy as the skin of a wolf, and knotted with veins as large as one's thumb.

'I say, master, where's the cleaver?' he again began, as he cast round his eyes in search of that instrument. But instead of replying to this inquiry, the Prophet put many questions to his disciple.

'Were you below when just now some new travellers arrived at the inn?'

'Yes, master; I was coming from the slaughter-house.'

'Who are these travellers?'

'Two young lasses mounted on a white horse, and an old fellow with a big moustache. But the cleaver?—my beasts are hungry and so am I—the cleaver!'

'Do you know where they have lodged these travellers?'

'The host took them to the far end of the court-yard.'

'The building which overlooks the fields?'

'Yes, master—but the cleaver——' A burst of frightful roaring shook the air, and interrupted Goliath.

'Hark to them!' he exclaimed; 'hunger has driven the beasts wild. If I could roar, I should do as they do. I have never seen Judas and Cain as they are to-night; they leap in their cages as if they'd knock all to pieces. As for Death, her eyes shine more than usual like candles—Poor Death!'

'So these girls are lodged in the building at the end of the court-yard,' resumed Morok, without attending to the observations of Goliath.

'Yes, yes—but, in the devil's name, where is the cleaver? Since Karl went away I have to do all the work, and that makes our meals very late.'

'Did the old man remain with the young girls?' asked Morok.

Goliath amazed that, notwithstanding his importunities, his master should still appear to neglect the animals' supper, regarded the Prophet with an increase of stupid astonishment.

'Answer, you brute!'

'If I am a brute, I have a brute's strength,' said Goliath, in a surly tone—and brute against brute, I have not always come the worst off.'

'I ask if the old man remained with the girls,' repeated Morok.

'Well, then—no!' returned the giant. 'The old man, after leading his horse to the stable, asked for a tub and some water, took his stand under the porch—d there—by the light of a lantern—he is washing out clothes. A man with grey moustache!--padding in soap-suds like a washerwoman—it's as if I were to feed canaries!' added Goliath, shrugging his shoulders with disdain. 'But now I've answered you, master, let me attend to the beasts' supper—and, king round for something, he added, 'where is the cleaver?'

After a moment of thoughtful silence, the Prophet said to Goliath, 'You will find no food to the beasts this evening.'

At first the giant could not understand these words, the idea was so incomprehensible to him.

'What is your pleasure, master?' said he.

'I forbid you to give any food to the beasts this evening.'

Goliath did not answer, but he opened wide his squinting eyes, folded his hands, and drew back a couple of steps.

'Well, dost hear me?' said Morok, with impatience. 'Is it plain enough?'

'Not feed? when our meat is there, and supper is already three hours after time!' cried Goliath, with ever-increasing amazement.

'Obey, and hold your tongue.'

'You must wish something bad to happen this evening. Hunger makes the beasts furious—and me also.'

'So much the better!'

'It'll drive 'em mad.'

'So much the better!'

'How, so much the better?—But——'

'It is enough!'

'But, devil take me, I am as hungry as the beasts!'

'Eat then—who prevents it? Your supper is ready, as you devour it raw.'

'I never eat without my beasts, nor they without me.'

'I tell you again, that, if you dare give any food to the beasts—I will turn you away.'

Goliath uttered a low growl as hoarse as a bear's, and looked at the Prophet with a mixture of anger and stupefaction.

Morok, having given his orders, walked up and down the loft, appearing to reflect. Then, addressing himself to Goliath, who was still plunged in deep perplexity, he said to him:

'Do you remember the burgomaster's, where I went to get my passport signed?—to-day his wife bought some books and a chaplet.'

'Yes,' answered the giant shortly.

'Go and ask his servant if I may be sure to find the burgomaster early to-morrow morning.'

'What for?'

'I may, perhaps, have something important to communicate; at all events, say that I beg him not to leave home without seeing me.'

'Good! but may I not feed the beasts before I go to the burgomaster's?—only the panther, who is most hungry? Come, master; only poor Death? just a little morsel to satisfy her; Cain and I and Judas can wait.'

'It is the panther, above all, that I forbid you to feed. Yes, her, above all the rest.'

'By the horns of the devil!' cried Goliath, 'what is the matter with you to-day? I can make nothing of it. It is a pity that Karl's not here; he, being cunning, would help me to understand why you prevent the beasts from eating when they are hungry.'

'You have no need to understand it.'

'Will not Karl soon come back?'

'He has already come back.'

'Where is he, then?'

'Off again.'

'What can be going on here? There is something in the wind. Karl goes, and returns, and goes again, and——'

'We are not talking of Karl, but of you; though hungry as a wolf you are cunning as a fox, and, when it suits you, as cunning as Karl.' And, changing on the sudden his tone and manner, Morok slapped the giant cordially on the shoulder.

'What! am I cunning?'

'The proof is, that there are ten florins to earn to-night—and you will be keen enough to earn them, I am sure.'

tattooed with warlike emblems in red and blue colours, two scars, deep enough to admit the finger, were distinctly visible. No wonder then, that, while smoking their pipes, and emptying their pots of beer, the Germans should display some surprise at the singular occupation of this tall, moustached, bald-headed old man, with the forbidding countenance—for the features of Dagobert assumed a harsh and grim expression, when he was no longer in presence of the two girls.

The sustained attention, of which he saw himself the object, began to put him out of patience, for his employment appeared to him quite natural. At this moment, the Prophet entered the porch, and, perceiving the soldier, eyed him attentively for several seconds; then approaching, he said to him in French, in a rather sly tone: 'It would seem, comrade, that you have not much confidence in the washerwomen of Mockern?'

Dagobert, without discontinuing his work, half turned his head with a frown, looked askant at the Prophet, and made him no answer.

Astonished at this silence, Morok resumed. 'If I do not deceive myself, you are French, my fine fellow. The words on your arm prove it, and your military air stamps you as an old soldier of the empire. Therefore I find, that, for a hero, you have taken rather late to wear petticoats.'

Dagobert remained mute, but he gnawed his moustache, and plied the soap, with which he was rubbing the linen, in a most hurried, not to say angry style; for the face and words of the beast-tamer displeased him more than he cared to show. Far from being discouraged, the Prophet continued: 'I am sure, my fine fellow, that you are neither deaf nor dumb; why, then, will you not answer me?'

Losing all patience, Dagobert turned abruptly round, looked Morok full in the face, and said to him in a rough voice. 'I don't know you: I don't wish to know you! Chain up your curb!' And he betook himself again to his washing.

'But we may make acquaintance. We can drink a glass of Rhine-wine together, and talk of our campaigns. I also have seen some service, I assure you; and that, perhaps, will induce you to be more civil.'

The veins on the bald forehead of Dagobert swelled perceptibly; he saw in the look and accent of the man, who thus obstinately addressed him, something designedly provoking; still he contained himself.

'I ask you, why should you not drink a glass of wine with me—we could talk about France. I lived there a long time; it is a fine country; and when I meet Frenchmen abroad, I feel sociable—particularly when they know how to use the soap as well as you do. If I had a house-wife I'd send her to your school.'

The sarcastic meaning was no longer disguised; impudence and bravado were legible in the Prophet's looks. Thinking that, with such an adversary, the dispute might become serious, Dagobert, who wished to avoid a quarrel at any price, carried off his tub to the other end of the porch, hoping thus to put an end to the scene which was a sore trial of his temper. A flash of joy lighted up the tawny eyes of the brute-tamer. The white circle which surrounded the pupil seemed to dilate. He ran his crooked fingers two or three times through his yellow beard, in token of satisfaction; then he advanced slowly towards the soldier, accompanied by several idlers from the common-room.

Notwithstanding his coolness, Dagobert, amazed and incensed at the impudent pertinacity of the Prophet, was at first disposed to break the washing-board on his head; but, remembering the orphans, he thought better of it.

Folding his arms upon his breast, Morok said to him, in a dry and insolent tone: 'It is very certain you are not civil, my man of suds!' Then, turning to the spectators, he continued in German: 'I tell this Frenchman, with his long moustache, that he is not civil. We shall see what answer he'll make. Perhaps

he added, with mock compunction ; ' but the Lord has enlightened me—I am his creature, and I ought to make his work respected.'

The mystical effrontery of this peroration was quite to the taste of the idlers ; the fame of the Prophet had reached Mockern, and, as a performance was expected on the morrow, this prelude much amused the company. On hearing the insults of his adversary, Dagobert could not help saying in the German language : ' I know German. Speak in German—the rest will understand you.'

New spectators now arrived, and joined the first comers ; the adventure had become exciting, and a ring was formed around the two persons most concerned.

The Prophet resumed in German. ' I said that you were not civil, and I now say you are grossly rude. What do you answer to that ?'

' Nothing !' said Dagobert, coldly, as he proceeded to rinse out another piece of linen.

' Nothing !' returned Morok ; ' that is very little. I will be less brief, and tell you, that, when an honest man offers a glass of wine civilly to a stranger, that stranger has no right to answer with insolence, and deserves to be taught manners if he does so.'

Great drops of sweat ran down Dagobert's forehead and cheeks ; his large imperial was incessantly agitated by nervous trembling—but he restrained himself. Taking, by two of the corners, the handkerchief which he had just dipped in the water, he shook it, wrung it, and began to hum to himself the burden of the old camp ditty :

' Out of Tirlmont's flea-haunted den,
We ride forth next day of the sen,
With sabre in hand, ah !
Good-bye to Amanda,' etc.

The silence to which Dagobert had condemned himself, almost choked him ; this song afforded him some relief.

Morok, turning towards the spectators, said to them, with an air of hypocritical restraint. ' We knew that the soldiers of Napoleon were pagans, who stabled their horses in churches, and offended the Lord a hundred times a day, and who, for their sins, were justly drowned in the Beresino, like so many Pharaohs ; but we did not know that the Lord, to punish these miscreants, had deprived them of courage—their single gift. Here is a man, who has insulted, in me, a creature favoured by divine grace, and who affects not to understand that I require an apology ; or else——'

' What ?' said Dagobert, without looking at the Prophet.

' Or you must give me satisfaction !—I have already told you that I have seen service. We shall easily find somewhere a couple of swords, and to-morrow morning, at peep of day, we can meet behind a wall, and show the colour of our blood—that is, if you have any in your veins !'

This challenge began to frighten the spectators, who were not prepared for so tragical a conclusion.

' What, fight ?—a very fine idea !' said one. ' To get yourselves both locked up in prison : the laws against duelling are strict.'

' Particularly with relation to strangers or nondescripts,' added another. ' If they were to find you with arms in your hands, the burgomaster would shut you up in gaol, and keep you there two or three months before trial.'

' Would you be so mean as to denounce us ?' asked Morok.

' No, certainly not,' cried several ; ' do as you like. We are only giving you a friendly piece of advice, by which you may profit, if you think fit.'

' What care I for prison ?' exclaimed the Prophet. ' Only give me a couple of swords, and you shall see to-morrow morning if I heed what the burgomaster can do or say.'

' What would you do with two swords ?' asked Dagobert, quietly.

'When you have one in your grasp, and I one in mine, you'd see. The Lord commands us to have a care of his honour!'

Dagobert shrugged his shoulders, made a bundle of his linen in his handkerchief, dried his soap, and put it carefully into a little oil-silk bag—then, whistling his favourite air of *Tirlemont*, moved to depart.

The Prophet frowned; he began to fear that his challenge would not be accepted. He advanced a step or so to encounter Dagobert, placed himself before him, as if to intercept his passage, and, folding his arms, and scanning him from head to foot with bitter insolence, said to him: 'So! an old soldier of that arch-robber, Napoleon, is only fit for a washerwoman, and refuses to fight!'

'Yes, he refuses to fight,' answered Dagobert, in a firm voice, but becoming fearfully pale. Never, perhaps, had the soldier given to his orphan charge such a proof of tenderness and devotion. For a man of his character to let himself be insulted with impunity, and refuse to fight—the sacrifice was immense!

'So you are a coward—you are afraid of me—and you confess it?'

At these words Dagobert made, as it were, a pull upon himself—as if a sudden thought had restrained him the moment he was about to rush on the Prophet. Indeed, he had remembered the two maidens, and the fatal hindrance which a duel, whatever might be the result, would occasion to their journey. But the impulse of anger, though rapid, had been so significant—the expression of the stern, pale face, bathed in sweat, was so daunting, that the Prophet and the spectators drew back a step.

Profound silence reigned for some seconds, and then, by a sudden reaction, Dagobert seemed to have gained the general interest. One of the company said to those near him: 'This man is clearly not a coward.'

'Oh, no! certainly not.'

'It sometimes requires more courage to refuse a challenge than to accept one.'

'After all, the Prophet was wrong to pick a quarrel about nothing—and with a stranger, too.'

'Yes, for a stranger, if he fought and was taken up, would have a good long imprisonment.'

'And then, you see,' added another, 'he travels with two young girls. In such a position, ought a man to fight about trifles? If he should be killed or put in prison, what would become of them, poor children?'

Dagobert turned towards the person who had pronounced these last words. He saw a stout fellow, with a frank and simple countenance; the soldier offered him his hand, and said with emotion:

'Thank you, sir.'

The German shook cordially the hand which Dagobert had proffered, and, holding it still in his own, he added: 'Do one thing, sir—share a bowl of punch with us. We will make that mischief-making Prophet acknowledge that he has been too touchy, and he shall drink to your health.'

Up to this moment the brute-tamer, enraged at the issue of this scene, for he had hoped that the soldier would accept his challenge, looked on with savage contempt at those who had thus sided against him. But now his features gradually relaxed; and, believing it useful to his projects to hide his disappointment, he walked up to the soldier, and said to him, with a tolerably good grace: 'Well, I give way to these gentlemen. I own I was wrong. Your frigid air had wounded me, and I was not master of myself. I repeat, that I was wrong,' he added, with suppressed vexation; 'the Lord commands humility—and—I beg your pardon.'

This proof of moderation and regret was highly appreciated and loudly applauded by the spectators. 'He asks your pardon; you cannot expect more,

my brave fellow !' said one of them, addressing Dagobert. 'Come, let us all drink together ; we make you this offer frankly—accept it in the same spirit.'

'Yes, yes ; accept it, we beg you, in the name of your pretty little girls,' said the stout man, hoping to decide Dagobert by this argument.

'Many thanks, gentlemen,' replied he, touched by the hearty advances of the Germans ; 'you are very worthy people. But, when one is treated, he must offer drink in return.'

'Well, we will accept it—that's understood. Each his turn, and all fair. We will pay for the first bowl, you for the second.'

'Poverty is no crime,' answered Dagobert ; 'and I must tell you honestly that I cannot afford to pay for drink. We have still a long journey to go, and I must not incur any useless expenses.'

The soldier spoke these words with such firm, but simple dignity, that the Germans did not venture to renew their offer, feeling that a man of Dagobert's character could not accept it without humiliation.

'Well, so much the worse,' said the stout man. 'I should have liked to clink glasses with you. Good night, my brave trooper !—good night—for it grows late, and mine host of the Falcon will soon turn us out of doors.'

'Good night, gentlemen,' replied Dagobert, as he directed his steps towards the stable, to give his horse a second allowance of provender.

Morok approached him, and said in a voice even more humble than before : 'I have acknowledged my error, and asked your pardon. You have not answered me ; do you still bear malice ?'

'If ever I meet you,' said the veteran, in a suppressed and hollow tone, 'when my children have no longer need of me, I will just say two words to you, and they will not be long ones.'

Then he turned his back abruptly on the Prophet, who walked slowly out of the yard.

The inn of the White Falcon formed a parallelogram. At one end rose the principal dwelling ; at the other was a range of buildings which contained sundry chambers, let at a low price to the poorer sort of travellers ; a vaulted passage opened a way through this latter into the country ; finally, on either side of the court-yard were sheds and stables, with lofts and garrets erected over them.

Dagobert, entering one of these stables, took from off a chest the portion of oats destined for his horse, and, pouring it into a winnowing-basket, shook it as he approached Jovial.

To his great astonishment, his old travelling companion did not respond with a joyous neigh to the rustle of the oats rattling on the wicker-work. Alarmed, he called Jovial with a friendly voice ; but the animal, instead of turning towards his master a look of intelligence, and impatiently striking the ground with his fore-feet, remained perfectly motionless.

More and more surprised, the soldier went up to him. By the dubious light of a stable-lantern, he saw the poor animal in an attitude which implied terror—his legs half bent, his head stretched forward, his ears down, his nostrils quivering ; he had drawn tight his halter, as if he wished to break it, in order to get away from the partition that supported his rack and manger ; abundant cold-sweat had speckled his hide with bluish stains, and his coat altogether looked dull and bristling, instead of standing out sleek and glossy from the dark background of the stable ; lastly, from time to time, his body shook with convulsive starts.

'Why, old Jovial !' said the soldier, as he put down the basket, in order to soothe his horse with more freedom, 'you are like thy master—afraid !—Yes,' he added with bitterness, 'as he thought of the offence he had himself endured, you are afraid—though no coward in general.'

Notwithstanding the caresses and the voice of his master, the horse continued to give signs of terror; he pulled somewhat less violently at his halter, and approaching his nostrils to the hand of Dagobert, sniffed audibly, as if he doubted it were he.

'You don't know me!' cried Dagobert. 'Something extraordinary must be passing here.'

The soldier looked around him with uneasiness. It was a large stable, faintly lighted by the lantern suspended from the roof, which was covered with innumerable cobwebs; at the further end, separated from Jovial by some stalls with bars between, were the three strong, black horses of the brute-tamer—as tranquil as Jovial was frightened.

Dagobert, struck with this singular contrast, of which he was soon to have the explanation, again caressed his horse; and the animal, gradually reassured by his master's presence, licked his hands, rubbed his head against him, uttered a low neigh, and gave him his usual tokens of affection.

'Come, come, this is how I like to see my old Jovial!' said Dagobert, as he took up the wheatear, and poured its contents to the manger. 'Now eat with a good appetite, for we have a long day's march to-morrow; and, above all, no more of these foolish fears about nothing! If thy comrade, Spoil-port, was here, he would keep you in heart; but he is along with the children, and takes care of them in my absence. Come, eat! instead of staring at me in that way.'

But the horse, having just touched the oats with his mouth, as if in obedience to his master, returned to them no more, and began to nibble at the sleeve of Dagobert's coat.

'Come, come, my poor Jovial! there is something the matter with you. You have generally such a good appetite, and now you leave your corn. 'Tis the first time this has happened since our departure,' said the soldier, who was now growing seriously uneasy, for the issue of his journey greatly depended on the health and vigour of his horse.

Just then a frightful roaring, so near that it seemed to come from the stable in which they were, gave so violent a shock to Jovial, that with one effort he broke his halter, leaped over the bar that marked his place, and, rushing at the open door, escaped into the court-yard.

Dagobert had himself started at the suddenness of this wild and fearful sound, which at once explained to him the cause of his horse's terror. The adjoining stable was occupied by the itinerant menagerie of the brute-tamer, and was only separated by the partition which supported the mangers. The three horses of the Prophet, accustomed to these howlings, had remained perfectly quiet.

'Good!' said the soldier, recovering himself; 'I understand it now. Jovial has heard another such roar before, and he can scent the animals of that insolent scoundrel. It is enough to frighten him,' added he, as he carefully collected the oats from the manger; 'once in another stable, and there must be others in this place, he will no longer leave his peck, and we shall be able to start early to-morrow morning.'

The terrified horse, after running and galloping about the yard, returned at the voice of the soldier, who easily caught him by the broken halter; and a hostler, whom Dagobert asked if there was another vacant stable, having pointed out one that was only intended for a single animal, Jovial was comfortably installed there.

When delivered from his ferocious neighbours, the horse became tranquil as before, and even amused himself much at the expense of Dagobert's top-coat, which, thanks to his tricks, might have afforded immediate occupation for his master's needle, if the latter had not been fully engaged in admiring the eager-

ness with which Jovial despatched his provender. Completely reassured on his account, the soldier shut the door of the stable, and proceeded to get his supper as quickly as possible, in order to rejoin the orphans, whom he reproached himself with having left so long.

CHAPTER V.

ROSE AND BLANCHE.

THE orphans occupied a dilapidated chamber in one of the most remote wings of the inn, with a single window opening upon the country. A bed without curtains, a table, and two chairs, composed the more than modest furniture of this retreat, which was now lighted by a lamp. On the table, which stood near the window, was deposited the knapsack of the soldier.

The great Siberian dog, who was lying close to the door, had already twice uttered a deep growl, and turned his head towards the window—but without giving any further effect to this hostile manifestation.

The two sisters, half recumbent in their bed, were clad in long white wrappers, buttoned at the neck and wrists. They wore no caps, but their beautiful chestnut hair was confined at the temples by a broad piece of tape, so that it might not get tangled during the night. These white garments, and the white fillet that like a halo encircled their brows, gave to their fresh and blooming faces a still more candid expression.

The orphans laughed and chatted, for, in spite of some early sorrows, they still retained the ingenuous gaiety of their age. The remembrance of their mother would sometimes make them sad, but this sorrow had in it nothing bitter; it was rather a sweet melancholy, to be sought instead of shunned. For them, this adored mother was not dead—she was only absent.

Almost as ignorant as Dagobert, with regard to devotional exercises, for in the desert where they had lived there was neither church nor priest, their faith, as was already said, consisted in this—that God, just and good, had so much pity for the poor mothers whose children were left on earth, that he allowed them to look down upon them from highest heaven—to see them always, to hear them always, and sometimes to send fair guardian angels to protect them. Thanks to this guileless illusion, the orphans, persuaded that their mother incessantly watched over them, felt, that to do wrong would be to afflict her, and to forfeit the protection of the good angels.—‘This was the entire theology of Rose and Blanche—a creed sufficient for such pure and loving souls.

Now, on the evening in question, the two sisters chatted together whilst waiting for Dagobert. Their theme interested them much, for, since some days, they had a secret, a great secret, which often quickened the beatings of their innocent hearts, often agitated their budding bosoms, changed to bright scarlet the roses on their cheeks, and infused a restless and dreamy languor into the soft blue of their large eyes.

Rose, this evening, occupied the edge of the couch, with her rounded arms crossed behind her head, which was half turned towards her sister; Blanche, with her elbow resting on the bolster, looked at her smilingly, and said: ‘Do you think he will come again to-night?’

‘Oh, yes! certainly. He promised us yesterday.’

‘He is so good, he would not break his promise.’

‘And so handsome, with his long fair curls.’

‘And his name—what a charming name!—how well it suits his face.’

‘And what a sweet smile and soft voice, when he says to us, taking us by the hand: “My children, bless God that He has given you one soul. What others seek elsewhere, you will find in yourselves.”’

"Since your two hearts," he added, "only make one."

"What pleasure to remember his words, sister!"

"We are so attentive! When I see you listening to him, it is as if I saw myself, my dear little mirror!" said Rose, laughing, and kissing her sister's forehead. "Well—when he speaks, your—or rather *our* eyes—are wide, wide open, our lips moving as if we repeated every word after him. It is no wonder we forget nothing that he says."

"And what he says is so grand, so noble, and generous."

"Then, my sister, as he goes on talking, what good thoughts rise within us! If we could but always keep them in mind."

"Do not be afraid! they will remain in our heart, like little birds in their mother's nests."

"And how lucky it is, Rose, that he loves us both at the same time!"

"He could not do otherwise, since we have but one heart between us."

"How could he love Rose, without loving Blanche?"

"What would have become of the poor neglected one?"

"And then again he would have found it so difficult to choose."

"We are so much like one another."

"So, to save himself that trouble," said Rose, laughing, "he has chosen us both."

"And is it not the best way? He is alone to love us; we are two together to think of him."—"Only he must not leave us till we reach Paris."

"And in Paris, too—we must see him there also."

"Oh, above all at Paris; it will be good to have him with us—and Dagobert, too—in that great city. Only think, Blanche, how beautiful it must be."

"Paris!—it must be like a city all of gold."

"A city, where every one must be happy, since it is so beautiful."

"But ought we, poor orphans, dare so much as to enter it? How people will look at us!"

"Yes—but every one there is happy, every one must be good also."

"They will love us."

"And, besides, we shall be with our friend with the fair hair and blue eyes."

"He has yet told us nothing of Paris."

"He has not thought of it; we must speak to him about it this very night."

"If he is in the mood for talking. Often, you know, he likes best to gaze on us in silence—his eyes on our eyes."

"Yes. In those moments, his look recalls to me the gaze of our dear mother."

"And, as she sees it all, how pleased she must be at what has happened to us!"

"Because, when we are so much beloved, we must, I hope, deserve it."

"See what a vain thing it is!" said Blanche, smoothing with her slender fingers the parting of the hair on her sister's forehead.

After a moment's reflection, Rose said to her: "Don't you think we should relate all this to Dagobert?"

"If you think so, let us do it."

"We tell him everything, as we told everything to mother. Why should we conceal this from him?"

"Especially as it is something which gives us so much pleasure."

"Do you not find that, since we have known our friend, our hearts beat quicker and stronger?"

"Yes, they seem to be more full."

"The reason why is plain enough; our friend fills up a good space in them."

"Well, we will do best to tell Dagobert what a lucky star ours is."

"You are right——" At this moment the dog gave another deep growl.

"Sister," said Rose, as she pressed closer to Blanche, "there is the dog growling again. What can be the matter with him?"

'Spoilsport, do not growl! Come hither,' said Blanche, striking with her little hand on the side of the bed.

The dog rose, again growled deeply, and came to lay his great, intelligent-looking head on the counterpane, still obstinately casting a side-long glance at the window; the sisters bent over him to pat his broad forehead, in the centre of which was a remarkable bump, the certain sign of extreme purity of race.

'What makes you growl so, Spoilsport?' said Blanche, pulling him gently by the ears—'eh, my good dog?'

'Poor beast! he is always so uneasy when Dagobert is away.'

'It is true; one would think he knows that he then has a double charge over us.'

'Sister, it seems to me, Dagobert is late in coming to say good-night.'

'No doubt he is attending to Jovial.'

'That makes me think that we did not bid good-night to dear old Jovial.'

'I am sorry for it.'

'Poor beast! he seems so glad when he licks our hands. One would think that he thanked us for our visit.'

'Luckily, Dagobert will have wished him good-night for us.'

'Good Dagobert! he is always thinking of us. How he spoils us! We remain idle, and he has all the trouble.'

'How can we prevent it?'

'What a pity that we are not rich, to give him a little rest.'

'We rich! Alas, my sister! we shall never be anything but poor orphans.'

'Oh, there's the medal!'

'Doubtless, there is some hope attached to it, else we should not have made this long journey.'

'Dagobert has promised to tell us all, this evening.'

She was prevented from continuing, for two of the window-panes flew to pieces with a loud crash.

The orphans, with a cry of terror, threw themselves into each other's arms, whilst the dog rushed towards the window, barking furiously.

Pale, trembling, motionless with affright, clasping each other in a close embrace, the two sisters held their breath; in their extreme fear, they durst not even cast their eyes in the direction of the window. The dog, with his forepaws resting on the sill, continued to bark with violence.

'Alas! what can it be?' murmured the orphans. 'And Dagobert not here?'

'Hark!' cried Rose, suddenly seizing Blanche by the arm; 'hark!—some one coming up the stairs!'

'Good heaven! it does not sound like the tread of Dagobert. Do you not hear what heavy footsteps?'

'Quick! come, Spoilsport, and defend us!' cried the two sisters at once, in an agony of alarm.

The boards of the wooden staircase really creaked beneath the weight of unusually heavy footsteps, and a singular kind of rustling was heard along the thin partition that divided the chamber from the landing-place. Then a ponderous mass, falling against the door of the room, shook it violently; and the girls, at the very height of terror, looked at each other without the power to speak.

The door opened. It was Dagobert.

At the sight of him Rose and Blanche joyfully exchanged a kiss, as if they had just escaped from a great danger.

'What is the matter? why are you afraid?' asked the soldier in surprise.

'Oh, if you only knew!' said Rose, panting as she spoke, for both her own heart and her sister's beat with violence.

'If you knew what has just happened! We did not recognise your footsteps—they seemed so heavy—and then that noise behind the partition!'

'Little frightened doves that you are ! I could not run up the stairs like a boy of fifteen, seeing that I carried my bed upon my back—a straw mattress that I have just flung down before your door, to sleep there as usual.'

'Bless me ! how foolish we must be, sister, not to have thought of that !' said Rose, looking at Blanche. And their pretty faces, which had together grown pale, together resumed their natural colour.

During this scene the dog, still resting against the window, did not cease barking a moment.

'What makes Spoilsport bark in that direction, my children ?' said the soldier.

'We do not know. Two of our window-panes have just been broken. That is what first frightened us so much.'

Without answering a word Dagobert flew to the window, opened it quickly, pushed back the shutter, and leaned out.

He saw nothing ; it was dark night. He listened ; but heard only the moaning of the wind.

'Spoilsport,' said he to his dog, pointing to the open window, 'leap out, old fellow, and search !' The faithful animal took one mighty spring and disappeared by the window, raised only about eight feet above the ground.

Dagobert, still leaning over, encouraged his dog with voice and gesture : 'Search, old fellow, search ! If there is any one there, pin him—your fangs are strong—and hold him fast till I come.'

But Spoilsport found no one. They heard him go backwards and forwards, snuffing on every side, and now and then uttering a low cry like a hound at fault.

'There is no one, my good dog, that's clear, or you would have had him by the throat ere this.' Then, turning to the maidens, who listened to his words and watched his movements with uneasiness : 'My girls,' said he, 'how were these panes broken ? Did you not remark ?'

'No, Dagobert ; we were talking together when we heard a great crash, and then the glass fell into the room.'

'It seemed to me,' added Rose, 'as if a shutter had struck suddenly against the window.'

Dagobert examined the shutter, and observed a long movable hook, designed to fasten it on the inside.

'It blows hard,' said he ; 'the wind must have swung round the shutter, and this hook broke the window. Yes, yes ; that is it. What interest could anybody have to play such a sorry trick ?' Then, speaking to Spoilsport, he asked, 'Well, my good fellow, is there no one ?'

The dog answered by a bark, which the soldier no doubt understood as a negative, for he continued : 'Well, then, come back !—Make the round—you will find some door open—you are never at a loss.'

The animal followed this advice. After growling for a few seconds beneath the window, he set off at a gallop to make the circuit of the building, and come back by the court-yard.

'Be quite easy, my children !' said the soldier, as he again drew near the orphans ; 'it was only the wind.'

'We were a good deal frightened,' said Rose.

'I believe you. But now I think of it, this draught is likely to give you cold.' And seeking to remedy this inconvenience, he took from a chair the reindeer pelisse, and suspended it from the spring-catch of the curtainless window, using the skirts to stop up as closely as possible the two openings made by the breaking of the panes.

'Thanks, Dagobert, how good you are ! We were very uneasy at not seeing you.'

'Yes, you were absent longer than usual. But what is the matter with you ?' added Rose, only just then perceiving that his countenance was disturbed and

pallid, for he was still under the painful influence of the brawl with Morok ;
‘how pale you are !’

‘Me, my pets ?—Oh, nothing.’

‘Yes, I assure you, your countenance is quite changed. Rose is right.’

‘I tell you there is nothing the matter,’ answered the soldier, not without some embarrassment, for he was little used to deceive ; till, finding an excellent excuse for his emotion, he added : ‘If I do look at all uncomfortable, it is your fright that has made me so, for indeed it was my fault.’

‘Your fault !’

‘Yes ; for if I had not lost so much time at supper, I should have been here when the window was broken, and have spared you the fright.’

‘Anyhow, you are here now, and we think no more of it.’

‘Why don’t you sit down ?’

‘I will, my children, for we have to talk together,’ said Dagobert, as he drew a chair close to the head of the bed. ‘Now tell me, are you quite awake ?’ he added, trying to smile in order to re-assure them. ‘Are those large eyes properly open ?’

‘Look, Dagobert !’ cried the two girls, smiling in their turn, and opening their blue eyes to the utmost extent.

‘Well, well,’ said the soldier ‘they are yet far enough from shutting ; besides, it is only nine o’clock.’

‘We also have something to tell, Dagobert,’ resumed Rose, after exchanging glances with her sister.

‘Indeed !’

‘A secret to tell you.’

‘A secret ?’

‘Yes, to be sure.’—‘Ah, and a very great secret !’ added Rose, quite seriously.

‘A secret which concerns us both,’ resumed Blanche.

‘Faith ! I should think so. What concerns the one always concerns the other. Are you not always, as the saying goes, “two faces under one hood ?”’

‘Truly, how can it be otherwise, when you put our heads under the great hood of your pelisse ?’ said Rose, laughing.

‘There they are again, mocking-birds ! One never has the last word with them. Come, ladies, your secret, since a secret there is.’

‘Speak, sister,’ said Rose.

‘No, miss, it is for you to speak. You are to-day on duty, as eldest, and such an important thing as telling a secret like that you talk of belongs of right to the elder sister. Come, I am listening to you,’ added the soldier, as he forced a smile, the better to conceal from the maidens how much he still felt the unpunished affronts of the brute-tamer.

It was Rose (who, as Dagobert said, was doing duty as eldest) that spoke for herself and for her sister.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SECRET.

‘FIRST of all, good Dagobert,’ said Rose, in a gracefully caressing manner, ‘as we are going to tell our secret—you must promise not to scold us.’

‘You will not scold your darlings, will you ?’ added Blanche, in a no less coaxing voice.

‘Granted !’ replied Dagobert gravely ; ‘particularly as I should not well know how to set about it—but why should I scold you ?’

‘Because we ought perhaps to have told you sooner what we are going to tell you.’

'Listen, my children,' said Dagobert sententiously, after reflecting a moment on this case of conscience; 'one of two things must be. Either you were right, or else you were wrong, to hide this from me. If you were right, very well; if you were wrong, it is done: so let's say no more about it. Go on—I am all attention.'

Completely reassured by this luminous decision, Rose resumed, while she exchanged a smile with her sister: 'Only think, Dagobert; for two successive nights we have had a visitor.'

'A visitor? cried the soldier, drawing himself up suddenly in his chair.

'Yes, a charming visitor—he is so very fair.'

'Fair!—the devil?' cried Dagobert, with a start.

'Yes, fair—and with blue eyes,' added Blanche.

'Blue eyes—blue devils?' and Dagobert again bounded on his seat.

'Yes, blue eyes—as long as that,' resumed Rose, placing the tip of one forefinger about the middle of the other.

'Zounds! they might be as long as that,' said the veteran, indicating the whole length of his arm from the elbow—'they might be as long as that, and it would have nothing to do with it. Fair, and with blue eyes. Pray what may this mean, young ladies?' and Dagobert rose from his seat with a severe and painfully unquiet look.

'There now, Dagobert, you have begun to scold us already!'

'Just at the very commencement,' added Blanche.

'Commencement!—what, is there to be a sequel? a finish?'

'A finish? we hope not,' said Rose, laughing like mad.

'All we ask is, that it should last for ever,' added Blanche, sharing in the hilarity of her sister.

Dagobert looked gravely from one to the other of the two maidens, as if trying to guess this enigma; but when he saw their sweet, innocent faces gracefully animated by a frank, ingenuous laugh, he reflected that they would not be so gay if they had any serious matter for self-reproach, and he felt pleased at seeing them so merry in the midst of their precarious position.

'Laugh on, my children!' he said. 'I like so much to see you laugh.'

Then, thinking that was not precisely the way in which he ought to treat the singular confession of the young girls, he added in a gruff voice: 'Yes, I like to see you laugh—but not when you receive fair visitors with blue eyes, young ladies!—Come, acknowledge that I'm an old fool to listen to such nonsense—you are only making game of me.'

'Nay, what we tell you is quite true.'

'You know we never tell stories,' added Rose.

'They are right—they never fib,' said the soldier, in renewed perplexity. 'But how the devil is such a visit possible? I sleep before your door—Spoilsport sleeps under your window—and all the blue eyes and fair locks in the world must come in by one of those two ways—and, if they had tried it, the dog and I, who have both of us quick ears, would have received their visits after our fashion. But come, children! pray, speak to the purpose. Explain yourselves!'

The two sisters, who saw, by the expression of Dagobert's countenance, that he felt really uneasy, determined no longer to trifle with his kindness. They exchanged a glance, and Rose, taking in her little hand the coarse, broad palm of the veteran, said to him: 'Come, do not plague yourself! We will tell you all about the visits of our friend, Gabriel.'

'There you are again!—He has a name, then?'

'Certainly, he has a name. It is Gabriel.'

'Is it not a pretty name, Dagobert? Oh, you will see and love, as we do, our beautiful Gabriel!'

'I'll love your beautiful Gabriel, will I?' said the veteran, shaking his head—

'Love your beautiful Gabriel?—that's as it may be. I must first know——' Then, interrupting himself, he added : 'It is queer. That reminds me of something.'

'Of what, Dagobert ?'

'Fifteen years ago, in the last letter that your father, on his return from France, brought me from my wife, she told me that, poor as she was, and with our little growing Agricola on her hands, she had taken in a poor deserted child, with the face of a cherub, and the name of Gabriel—and only a short time since I heard of him again.'

'And from whom, then ?'

'You shall know that by-and-by.'

'Well, then—since you have a Gabriel of your own—there is the more reason that you should love ours.'

'Yours ! but who is yours ? I am on thorns till you tell me.'

'You know, Dagobert,' resumed Rose, 'that Blanche and I are accustomed to fall asleep, holding each other by the hand.'

'Yes, yes, I have often seen you in your cradle. I was never tired of looking at you : it was so pretty.'

'Well, then—two nights ago, we had just fallen asleep, when we beheld——'

'Oh, it was in a dream !' cried Dagobert. 'Since you were asleep, it was in a dream !'

'Certainly, in a dream—how else would you have it ?'

'Pray let my sister go on with her tale !'

'Ah, well and good !' said the soldier with a sigh of satisfaction ; 'well and good ! To be sure, I was tranquil enough in any case—because—but still—I like it better to be a dream. Continue, my little Rose.'

'Once asleep, we both dreamt the same thing.'

'What ! both the same ?'

'Yes, Dagobert ; for the next morning when we awoke we related our two dreams to each other.'

'And they were exactly alike.'

'That's odd enough, my children ; and what was this dream all about ?'

'In our dream, Blanche and I were seated together, when we saw enter a beautiful angel, with a long white robe, fair locks, blue eyes, and so handsome and benign a countenance, that we clasped our hands as if to pray to him. Then he told us, in a soft voice, that he was called Gabriel ; that our mother had sent him to be our guardian angel, and that he would never abandon us.'

'And, then,' added Blanche, 'he took us each by the hand, and, bending his fair face over us, looked at us for a long time in silence, with so much goodness—with so much goodness, that we could not withdraw our eyes from his.'

'Yes,' resumed Rose, 'and his look seemed, by turns, to attract us, or to go to our hearts. At length, to our great sorrow, Gabriel quitted us, having told us that we should see him again the following night.'

'And did he make his appearance ?'

'Certainly. Judge with what impatience we waited the moment of sleep, to see if our friend would return, and visit us in our slumbers.'

'Humph !' said Dagobert, scratching his forehead ; 'this reminds me, young ladies, that you kept on rubbing your eyes last evening, and pretending to be half asleep. I wager, it was all to send me away the sooner, and to get to your dream as fast as possible.'

'Yes, Dagobert.'

'The reason being, you could not say to me, as you would to Spoilsport : "Lie down, Dagobert !" Well—so your friend Gabriel came back ?'

'Yes, and this time he talked to us a great deal, and gave us, in the name of our mother, such touching, such noble counsels, that the next day, Rose and

I spent our whole time in recalling every word of our guardian angel—and his face, and his look—'

'This reminds me again, young ladies, that you were whispering all along the road this morning; and that when I spoke of white, you answered black.'

'Yes, Dagobert, we were thinking of Gabriel.'

'And, ever since, we love him as well as he loves us.'

'But he is only one between both of you!'

'Was not our mother one between us?'

'And you, Dagobert—are you not also one for us both?'

'True, true! And yet, do you know, I shall finish by being jealous of that Gabriel!'

'You are our friend by day—he is our friend by night.'

'Let's understand it clearly. If you talk of him all day, and dream of him all night, what will there remain for me?'

'There will remain for you your two orphans, whom you love so much,' said Rose

'And who have only you left upon earth,' added Blanche, in a caressing tone.

'Humph! humph! that's right, coax the old man over! Nay, believe me, my children,' added the soldier, tenderly, 'I am quite satisfied with my lot. I can afford to let you have your Gabriel. I felt sure that Spoilsport and myself could take our rest in quiet. After all, there is nothing so astonishing in what you tell me; your first dream struck your fancy, and you talked so much about it that you had a second; nor should I be surprised if you were to see this fine fellow a third time.'

'Oh, Dagobert! do not make a jest of it! They are only dreams, but we think our mother sends them to us. Did she not tell us that orphan children were watched over by guardian angels? Well, Gabriel is our guardian angel; he will protect us, and he will protect you also.'

'Very kind of him to think of me; but you see, my dear children, for the matter of defence, I prefer the dog; he is less fair than your angel, but he has better teeth, and that is more to be depended on.'

'How provoking you are, Dagobert—always jesting!'

'It is true; you can laugh at everything.'

'Yes, I am astonishingly gay; I laugh with my teeth shut, in the style of old Jovial. Come, children, don't scold me: I know I am wrong. The remembrance of your dear mother is mixed with this dream, and you do well to speak of it seriously. Besides,' added he, with a grave air, 'dreams will sometimes come true. In Spain, two of the Empress's dragoons, comrades of mine, dreamt, the night before their death, that they would be poisoned by the monks—and so it happened. If you continue to dream of this fair angel Gabriel, it is—it is—why, it is, because you are amused by it; and, as you have none too many pleasures in the daytime, you may as well get an agreeable sleep at night. But, now, my children, I have also much to tell you; it will concern your mother; promise me not to be sad.'

'Be satisfied! when we think of her we are not sad, though serious.'

'That is well. For fear of grieving you, I have always delayed the moment of telling what your poor mother would have confided to you as soon as you were no longer children. But she died before she had time to do so, and that which I have to tell broke her heart—as it nearly did mine. I put off this communication as long as I could, taking for pretext that I would say nothing till we came to the field of battle where your father was made prisoner. That gave me time; but the moment is now come; I can shuffle it off no longer.'

'We listen, Dagobert,' responded the two maidens, with an attentive and melancholy air.

After a moment's silence, during which he appeared to reflect, the veteran thus addressed the young girls:

'Your father, General Simon, was the son of a workman, who remained a workman; for, notwithstanding all that the general could say or do, the old man was obstinate in not quitting his trade. He had a heart of gold and a head of iron, just like his son. You may suppose, my children, that when your father, who had enlisted as a private soldier, became a general and a count of the empire, it was not without toil or without glory.'

'A count of the empire? what is that, Dagobert?'

'Flummery—a title, which the emperor gave over and above the promotion, just for the sake of saying to the people, whom he loved because he was one of them: "Here, children! you wish to play at nobility! you shall be nobles. You wish to play at royalty! you shall be kings. Take what you like—nothing is too good for you—enjoy yourselves!"'

'Kings!' said the two guls, joining their hands in admiration.

'Kings of the first water. Oh, he was no niggard of his crowns, our Emperor! I had a bed-fellow of mine, a brave soldier, who was afterwards promoted to be king. This flattered us; for, if it was not one, it was the other. And so, at this game, your father became count; but, count or not, he was one of the best and bravest generals of the army.'

'He was handsome, was he not, Dagobert!—mother always said so.'

'Oh, yes! indeed he was—but quite another thing from your fair guardian angel. Picture to yourself a fine, dark man, who looked splendid in his full uniform, and could put fire into the soldiers' hearts. With him to lead, we would have charged up into Heaven itself—that is, if Heaven had permitted it,' added Dagobert, not wishing to wound in any way the religious beliefs of the orphans.

'And father was as good as he was brave, Dagobert.'

'Good, my children? Yes, I should say so!—He could bend a horse-shoe in his hand as you would bend a card, and the day he was taken prisoner he had cut down the Prussian artillerymen on their very cannon. With strength and courage like that, how could he be otherwise than good? It is then about nineteen years ago, not far from this place—on the spot I showed you before we arrived at the village—that the general, dangerously wounded, fell from his horse. I was following him at the time, and ran to his assistance. Five minutes after, we were made prisoners—and by whom, think you?—by a Frenchman.'

'A Frenchman?'

'Yes, an emigrant marquis, a colonel in the service of Russia,' answered Dagobert, with bitterness. 'And so, when this marquis advanced towards us, and said to the general: "Surrender, sir, to a countryman!"—"A Frenchman, who fights against France," replied the general, "is no longer my countryman; he is a traitor, and I'd never surrender to a traitor!" And, wounded though he was, he dragged himself up to a Russian grenadier, and delivered him his sabre, saying: "I surrender to you, my brave fellow!" The marquis became pale with rage at it.'

The orphans looked at each other with pride, and a rich crimson mantled their cheeks, as they exclaimed: 'Oh, our brave father!'

'Ah, those children,' said Dagobert, as he proudly twirled his moustache. 'One sees they have soldier's blood in their veins! Well,' he continued, 'we were now prisoners. The general's last horse had been killed under him; and, to perform the journey, he mounted Jovial, who had not been wounded that day. We arrived at Warsaw, and there it was that the general first saw your mother. She was called the *Pearl of Warsaw*; that is saying everything. Now he, who admired all that is good and beautiful, fell in love with her almost immediately; and she loved him in return; but her parents had promised her to another—and that other was the same——'

Dagobert was unable to proceed. Rose uttered a piercing cry, and pointed

CHAPTER VII.

THE TRAVELLER.

UPON the cry of the young girl, Dagobert rose abruptly.

'What is the matter, Rose?'

'There—there!' she said, pointing to the window. 'I thought I saw a hand move the pelisse.'

She had not concluded these words before Dagobert rushed to the window and opened it, tearing down the mantle which had been suspended from the fastening.

It was still dark night, and the wind was blowing hard. The soldier listened, but could hear nothing.

Returning to fetch the lamp from the table, he shaded the flame with his hand, and strove to throw the light outside. Still he saw nothing. Persuaded that a gust of wind had disturbed and shaken the pelisse, and that Rose had been deceived by her own fears, he again shut the window.

'Be satisfied, children! The wind is very high; it is that which lifted the corner of the pelisse.'

'Yet methought I saw plainly the fingers which had hold of it,' said Rose, still trembling.

'I was looking at Dagobert,' said Blanche, 'and I saw nothing.'

'There was nothing to see, my children; the thing is clear enough. The window is at least eight feet above the ground; none but a giant could reach it without a ladder. Now, had any one used a ladder, there would not have been time to remove it; for, as soon as Rose cried out, I ran to the window, and, when I held out the light, I could see nothing.'

'I must have been deceived,' said Rose.

'You may be sure, sister, it was only the wind,' added Blanche.

'Then I beg pardon for having disturbed you, my good Dagobert.'

'Never mind!' replied the soldier musingly; 'I am only sorry that Spoilsport is not come back. He would have watched the window, and that would have quite tranquillised you. But he no doubt scented the stable of his comrade, Jovial, and will have called in to bid him good night on the road. I have half a mind to go and fetch him.'

'Oh, no, Dagobert! do not leave us alone,' cried the maidens; 'we are too much afraid.'

'Well, the dog is not likely to remain away much longer, and I am sure we shall soon hear him scratching at the door, so we will continue our story,' said Dagobert, as he again seated himself near the head of the bed, but this time with his face towards the window.

'Now the general was prisoner at Warsaw,' continued he, 'and in love with your mother, whom they wished to marry to another. In 1814, we learned the finish of the war, the banishment of the Emperor to the Isle of Elba, and the return of the Bourbons. In concert with the Prussians and Russians, who had brought them back, they had exiled the Emperor. Learning all this, your mother said to the general: "The war is finished; you are free, but your Emperor is in trouble. You owe everything to him; go and join him in his misfortunes. I know not when we shall meet again, but I will never marry any one but you, I am yours till death!"—Before he set out the general called me to him, and said: "Dagobert, remain here; Mademoiselle Eva may have need of you to fly from her family, if they should press too hard upon her; our correspondence will have to pass through your hands; at Paris, I shall see your wife and son; I will comfort them, and tell them you are my friend."

'Always the same,' said Rose, with emotion, as she looked affectionately at Dagobert.

'As faithful to the father and mother as to their children,' added Blanche.

'To love one was to love them all,' replied the soldier. 'Well, the general joined the Emperor at Elba; I remained at Warsaw, concealed in the neighbourhood of your mother's house; I received the letters, and conveyed them to her clandestinely. In one of those letters—I feel proud to tell you of it, my children—the general informed me that the Emperor himself had remembered me.'

'What, did he know you?'

'A little, I flatter myself—"Oh! Dagobert!" said he to your father, who was talking to him about me; "a horse-grenadier of my old guard—a soldier of Egypt and Italy, battered with wounds—an old dare-devil, whom I decorated with my own hand at Wagram—I have not forgotten him!"—I vow, children, when your mother read that to me, I cried like a fool.'

'The Emperor—what a fine golden face he has on the silver cross with the red ribbon that you would sometimes show us when we behaved well!'

'That cross—given by him—is my relic. It is there in my knapsack, with whatever we have of value—our little purse and papers. But, to return to your mother; it was a great consolation to her, when I took her letters from the general, or talked with her about him—for she suffered much—oh, so much! In vain her parents tormented and persecuted her; she always answered: "I will never marry any one but General Simon." A spirited woman, I can tell you—resigned, but wonderfully courageous. One day she received a letter from the general; he had left the Isle of Elba with the Emperor; the war had again broken out, a short campaign, but as fierce as ever, and heightened by soldiers' devotion. In that campaign of France, my children, especially at Montmirail, your father fought like a lion, and his division followed his example. It was no longer valour—it was frenzy. He told me that, in Champagne, the peasants killed so many of those Prussians, that their fields were manured with them for years. Men, women, children, all rushed upon them. Pitchforks, stones, mattocks, all served for the slaughter. It was a true wolf-hunt!'

The veins swelled on the soldier's forehead, and his cheeks flushed as he spoke, for this popular heroism recalled to his memory the sublime enthusiasm of the wars of the republic—those armed risings of a whole people, from which dated the first steps of his military career, as the triumphs of the Empire were the last days of his service.

The orphans, too, daughters of a soldier and a brave woman, did not shrink from the rough energy of these words, but felt their cheeks glow, and their hearts beat tumultuously.

'How happy we are to be the children of so brave a father!' cried Blanche.

'It is a happiness and an honour too, my children—for the evening of the battle of Montmirail, the Emperor, to the joy of the whole army, made your father Duke of Ligny and Marshal of France.'

'Marshal of France!' said Rose in astonishment, without understanding the exact meaning of the words.

'Duke of Ligny!' added Blanche, with equal surprise.

'Yes; Peter Simon, the son of a workman, became duke and marshal—there is nothing higher except a king!' resumed Dagobert, proudly. 'That's how the Emperor treated the sons of the people, and, therefore, the people were devoted to him. It was all very fine to tell them: "Your Emperor makes you food for cannon." "Stuff!" replied the people, who are no fools, "another would make us food for misery. We prefer the cannon, with the chance of becoming captain or colonel, marshal, king—or invalid; that's better than to perish with hunger, cold, and age, on straw in a garret, after toiling forty years for others."'

'Even in France—even in Paris, that beautiful city—do you mean to say there are poor people who die of hunger and misery, Dagobert?'

'Even in Paris? Yes, my children; therefore, I come back to the point—the cannon is better. With it, one has the chance of becoming, like your father, duke and marshal: when I say duke and marshal, I am partly right and partly wrong, for the title and the rank were not recognised in the end; because, after Montmirail, came a day of gloom, a day of great mourning, when, as the general has told me, old soldiers like myself wept—yes, wept!—on the evening of a battle. That day, my children, was Waterloo!'

There was in these simple words of Dagobert an expression of such deep sorrow, that it thrilled the hearts of the orphans.

'Alas!' resumed the soldier, with a sigh, 'there are days which seem to have a curse on them. That same day, at Waterloo, the general fell, covered with wounds, at the head of a division of the Guards. When he was nearly cured, which was not for a long time, he solicited permission to go to St. Helena—another island at the far end of the world, to which the English had carried the Emperor, to torture him at their leisure; for if he was very fortunate in the first instance, he had to go through a deal of hard rubs at last, my poor children.'

'If you talk in that way, you will make us cry, Dagobert.'

'There is cause enough for it—the Emperor suffered so much! He bled cruelly at the heart, believe me. Unfortunately, the general was not with him at St. Helena; he would have been one more to console him; but they would not allow him to go. Then, exasperated, like so many others, against the Bourbons, the general engaged in a conspiracy to recall the son of the Emperor. He relied especially on one regiment, nearly all composed of his old soldiers, and he went down to a place in Picardy, where they were then in garrison; but the conspiracy had already been divulged. Arrested the moment of his arrival, the general was taken before the colonel of the regiment. And this colonel,' said the soldier, after a brief pause, 'who do you think it was again? Bah! it would be too long to tell you all, and would only make you more sad; but it was a man whom your father had many reasons to hate. When he found himself face to face with him, he said: "If you are not a coward, you will give me one hour's liberty, and we will fight to the death; I hate you for this, I despise you for that"—and so on. The colonel accepted the challenge, and gave your father his liberty till the morrow. The duel was a desperate one; the colonel was left for dead on the spot.'

'Merciful heaven!'

'The general was yet wiping his sword, when a faithful friend came to him, and told him he had only just time to save himself. In fact, he happily succeeded in leaving France—yes, happily—for, a fortnight after, he was condemned to death as a conspirator.'

'What misfortunes, good heaven!'

'There was some luck, however, in the midst of his troubles. Your mother had kept her promise bravely, and was still waiting for him. She had written to him: "The Emperor first, and me next!" Not able to do anything more for the Emperor, nor even for his son, the general, banished from France, set out for Warsaw. Your mother had lost her parents, and was now free; they were married—and I am one of the witnesses to the marriage.'

'You are right, Dagobert; that was great happiness in the midst of great misfortunes!'

'Yes, they were very happy; but, as it happened with all good hearts, the happier they were themselves, the more they felt for the sorrows of others—and there was quite enough to grieve them at Warsaw. The Russians had again begun to treat the Poles as their slaves; your brave mother, though of French birth, was a Pole in heart and soul; she spoke out boldly what others did not dare speak in a whisper, and all the unfortunate called her their protecting

angel. That was enough to excite the suspicions of the Russian governor. One day, a friend of the general's, formerly a colonel in the lancers, a brave and worthy man, was condemned to be exiled to Siberia, for a military plot against the Russians. He took refuge in your father's house, and lay hid there; but his retreat was discovered. During the next night, a party of Cossacks, commanded by an officer and followed by a travelling-carriage, arrive at our door; they rouse the general from his sleep, and take him away with them.'

'Oh, heaven! what did they mean to do with him?'

'Conduct him out of the Russian dominions, with a charge never to return, on pain of perpetual imprisonment. His last words were: 'Dagobert, I entrust to thee my wife and child!'—for it wanted yet some months of the time when you were to be born. Well, notwithstanding that, they exiled your mother to Siberia; it was an opportunity to get rid of her; she did too much good at Warsaw, and they feared her accordingly. Not content with banishing her, they confiscated all her property; the only favour she could obtain was, that I should accompany her, and, had it not been for Jovial, whom the general had given to me, she would have had to make the journey on foot. It was thus, with her on horseback, and I leading her as I lead you, my children, that we arrived at the poverty-stricken village, where, three months after, you poor little things were born!'

'And our father?'

'It was impossible for him to return to Russia; impossible for your mother to think of flight, with two children; impossible for the general to write to her, as he knew not where she was.'

'So, since that time, you have had no news of him?'

'Yes, my children—once we had news.'

'And by whom?'

After a moment's silence, Dagobert resumed with a singular expression of countenance: 'By whom?—by one who is not like other men. Yes—that you may understand me better, I will relate to you an extraordinary adventure, which happened to your father during his last French campaign. He had been ordered by the emperor to carry a battery, which was playing heavily on our army; after several unsuccessful efforts, the general put himself at the head of a regiment of cuirassiers, and charged the battery, intending, as was his custom, to cut down the men at their guns. He was on horseback, just before the mouth of a cannon, where all the artillerymen had been either killed or wounded, when one of them still found strength to raise himself upon one knee, and to apply the lighted match to the touch-hole—and that when your father was about ten paces in front of the loaded piece.'

'Oh! what a peril for our father!'

'Never, he told me, had he run such imminent danger—for he saw the artilleryman apply the match, and the gun go off—but, at the very nick, a man of tall stature, dressed as a peasant, and whom he had not before remarked, threw himself in front of the cannon.'

'Unfortunate creature! what a horrible death!'

'Yes,' said Dagobert, thoughtfully; 'it should have been so. He ought by rights to have been blown into a thousand pieces. But no—nothing of the kind!'

'What do you tell us?'

'What the general told me. "At the moment when the gun went off," as he often repeated to me, "I shut my eyes by an involuntary movement, that I might not see the mutilated body of the poor wretch who had sacrificed himself in my place. When I again opened them, the first thing I saw in the midst of the smoke, was the tall figure of this man, standing erect and calm on the same spot, and casting a sad, mild look on the artilleryman, who, with one knee on the ground, and his body thrown backward, gazed on him with at

much terror as if he had been the devil in person. Afterwards, in the tumult of the battle, I lost sight of this man," added your father.'

'Bless me, Dagobert ! how can this be possible ?'

'That is just what I said to the general. He answered me, that he had never been able to explain to himself this event, which seemed as incredible as it was true. Moreover, your father must have been greatly struck with the countenance of this man, who appeared, he said, about thirty years of age—for he remarked, that his extremely black eyebrows were joined together, and formed, as it were, one line from temple to temple, so that he seemed to have a black streak across his forehead. Remember this, my children ; you will soon see why.'

'Oh, Dagobert ! we shall not forget it,' said the orphans, becoming more and more astonished as he proceeded.

'Is it not strange—this man with a black seam on his forehead ?'

'Well, you shall hear. The general had, as I told you, been left for dead at Waterloo. During the night, which he passed on the field of battle, in a sort of delirium brought on by the fever of his wounds, he saw, or fancied he saw, this same man bending over him, with a look of great mildness and deep melancholy, stanching his wounds, and using every effort to revive him. But as your father, whose senses were still wandering, repulsed his kindness—saying, that after such a defeat, it only remained to die—it appeared as if this man replied to him : " You must live for Eva !"—meaning your mother, whom the general had left at Warsaw, to join the Emperor, and make this campaign of France.'

'How strange, Dagobert !—And since then, did our father never see this man ?'

'Yes, he saw him—for it is he who brought news of the general to your poor mother.'

'When was that ? We never heard of it.'

'You remember that, on the day your mother died, you went to the pine-forest with old Fedora ?'

'Yes,' answered Rose, mournfully ; 'to fetch some heath, of which our mother was so fond.'

'Poor mother !' added Blanche ; 'she appeared so well that morning, that we could not dream of the calamity which awaited us before night.'

'True, my children ; I sang and worked that morning in the garden, expecting, no more than you did, what was to happen. Well, as I was singing at my work, on a sudden I heard a voice ask me in French : " Is this the village of Milosk ?"—I turned round, and saw before me a stranger ; I looked at him attentively, and, instead of replying, fell back two steps, quite stupefied.'

'Ah, why ?'

'He was of tall stature, very pale, with a high and open forehead ; but his eyebrows met, and seemed to form one black streak across it.'

'Then it was the same man who had twice been with our father in battle ?'

'Yes—it was he.'

'But, Dagobert,' said Rose, thoughtfully, 'is it not a long time since these battles ?'

'About sixteen years.'

'And of what age was this stranger ?'

'Hardly more than thirty.'

'Then how can it be the same man, who sixteen years before, had been with our father in the wars ?'

'You are right,' said Dagobert, after a moment's silence, and shrugging his shoulders : 'I may have been deceived by a chance likeness—and yet—'

'Or, if it were the same, he could not have got older all that while.'

'But did you ask him, if he had not formerly relieved our father ?'

'At first I was so surprised that I did not think of it; and afterwards, he remained so short a time, that I had no opportunity. Well, he asked me for the village of Milosk. "You are there, sir," said I, "but how do you know that I am a Frenchman?" "I heard you singing as I passed," replied he; "could you tell me the house of Madame Simon, the general's wife?" "She lives here, sir." Then, looking at me for some seconds in silence, he took me by the hand and said: "You are the friend of General Simon—his best friend?" Judge of my astonishment, as I answered: "But, sir, how do you know?" "He has often spoken of you with gratitude." "You have seen the general then?" "Yes, some time ago, in India. I am also his friend: I bring news of him to his wife, whom I knew to be exiled in Siberia. At Tobolsk, whence I come, I learned that she inhabits this village. Conduct me to her!"

'The good traveller—I love him already,' said Rose.

'Yes, being father's friend.'

'I begged him to wait an instant whilst I went to inform your mother, so that the surprise might not do her harm: five minutes after, he was beside her.'

'And what kind of man was this traveller, Dagobert?'

'He was very tall; he wore a dark pelisse, and a fur cap, and had long black hair.'

'Was he handsome?'

'Yes, my children—very handsome; but with so mild and melancholy an air, that it pained my heart to see him.'

'Poor man! he had doubtless known some great sorrow.'

'Your mother had been closeted with him for some minutes, when she called me to her and said that she had just received good news of the general. She was in tears, and had before her a large packet of papers; it was a kind of journal, which your father had written every evening to console himself; not being able to speak to her, he told the paper all that he would have told her.'

'Oh! where are these papers, Dagobert?'

'There, in the knapsack, with my cross and our purse. One day I will give them to you: but I have picked out a few leaves here and there for you to read presently. You will see why.'

'Had our father been long in India?'

'I gathered from the few words which your mother said, that the general had gone to that country, after fighting for the Greeks against the Turks—for he always liked to side with the weak against the strong. In India he made fierce war against the English: they had murdered our prisoners in pontoons, and tortured the Emperor at St. Helena, and the war was a doubly good one, for in harming them he served a just cause.'

'What cause did he serve then?'

'That of one of the poor native princes, whose territories the English lay waste, till the day when they can take possession of them against law and right. You see, my children, it was once more the weak against the strong, and your father did not miss this opportunity. In a few months he had so well-trained and disciplined the twelve or fifteen thousand men of the prince, that, in two encounters, they cut to pieces the English sent against them, and who, no doubt, had in their reckoning left out your brave father, my children. But come, you shall read some pages of his journal, which will tell you more and better than I can. Moreover, you will find in them a name which you ought always to remember; that's why I chose this passage.'

'Oh, what happiness! To read the pages written by our father, is almost to hear him speak,' said Rose.

'It is as if he were close beside us,' added Blanche.

And the girls stretched out their hands with eagerness, to catch hold of the leaves that Dagobert had taken from his pocket. Then, by a simultaneous

movement, full of touching grace, they pressed the writing of their father in silence to their lips.

'You will see also, my children, at the end of this letter, why I was surprised that your guardian angel, as you say, should be called Gabriel. Read, read,' added the soldier, observing the puzzled air of the orphans. 'Only I ought to tell you, that, when he wrote this, the general had not yet fallen in with the traveller who brought the papers.'

Rose, sitting up in her bed, took the leaves, and began to read in a soft and trembling voice, Blanche, with her head resting on her sister's shoulder, followed attentively every word. One could even see, by the slight motion of her lips, that she too was reading, but only to herself.

CHAPTER VIII.

EXTRACTS FROM GENERAL SIMON'S DIARY.

Brvonac on the Mountains of Ava, February the 20th, 1830.

'EACH time I add some pages to this journal, written now in the heart of India, where the fortune of my wandering and proscribed existence has thrown me—a journal which, alas! my beloved Eva, you may never read—I experience a sweet, yet painful emotion; for, although to converse thus with you is a consolation, it brings back the bitter thought that I am unable to see or speak to you.

'Still, if these pages should ever meet your eyes, your generous heart will throb at the name of the intrepid being, to whom I am this day indebted for my life, and to whom I may thus perhaps owe the happiness of seeing you again—you and my child—for of course our child lives. Yes, it must be—for else, poor wife, what an existence would be yours amid the horrors of exile! Dear soul! he must now be fourteen. Whom does he resemble? Is he like you? Has he your large and beautiful blue eyes?—Madman that I am! how many times, in this long day-book, have I already asked the same idle question, to which you can return no answer!—How many times shall I continue to ask it?—But you will teach our child to speak and love the somewhat savage name of *Djalma*.'

'*Djalma*!' said Rose, as with moist eyes she left off reading.

'*Djalma*!' repeated Blanche, who shared the emotion of her sister. 'Oh, we shall never forget that name.'

'And you will do well, my children: for it seems to be the name of a famous soldier, though a very young one. But go on, my little Rose!'

'I have told you in the preceding pages, my dear Eva, of the two glorious days we had this month. The troops of my old friend the prince, which daily make fresh advances in European discipline, have performed wonders. We have beaten the English, and obliged them to abandon a portion of this unhappy country, which they had invaded in contempt of all the rights of justice, and which they continue to ravage without mercy; for, in these parts, warfare is another name for treachery, pillage, and massacre. This morning, after a toilsome march through a rocky and mountainous district, we received information from our scouts, that the enemy had been reinforced, and was preparing to act on the offensive; and, as we were separated from them by a distance of a few leagues only, an engagement became inevitable. My old friend the prince, the father of my deliverer, was impatient to march to the attack. The action began about three o'clock; it was very bloody and furious. Seeing that our men wavered for a moment, for they were inferior in number, and the English reinforcements consisted of fresh troops, I charged at the head of our weak reserve of cavalry. The old prince was in the centre, fighting, as he always fights, intrepidly; his son, *Djalma*, scarcely eighteen, as brave as his father,

did not leave my side. In the hottest part of the engagement, my horse was killed under me, and rolling over into a ravine, along the edge of which I was riding, I found myself so awkwardly entangled beneath him, that for an instant I thought my thigh was broken.'

'Poor father !' said Blanche.

'This time, happily, nothing more dangerous ensued—thanks to Djalma ! You see, Dagobert,' added Rose, 'that I remember the name.' And she continued to read.

'The English thought—and a very flattering opinion it was—that, if they could kill me, they would make short work of the prince's army. So a Sepoy officer, with five or six irregulars—cowardly, ferocious plunderers—seeing me roll down the ravine, threw themselves into it to despatch me. Surrounded by fire and smoke, and carried away by their ardour, our mountaineers had not seen me fall ; but Djalma never left me. He leaped into the ravine to my assistance, and his cool intrepidity saved my life. He had held the fire of his double-barrelled carbine ; with one load, he killed the officer on the spot ; with the other he broke the arm of an irregular, who had already pierced my left hand with his bayonet. But do not be alarmed, dear Eva ; it is nothing—only a scratch.'

'Wounded—again wounded—alas !' cried Blanche, clasping her hands together, and interrupting her sister.

'Take courage,' said Dagobert. 'I dare say it was only a scratch, as the general calls it. Formerly, he used to call wounds, which did not disable a man from fighting, blank wounds. There was no one like him for such sayings.'

'Djalma, seeing me wounded,' resumed Rose, wiping her eyes, 'made use of his heavy carbine as a club, and drove back the soldiers. At that instant, I perceived a new assailant, who, sheltered behind a clump of bamboos which commanded the ravine, slowly lowered his long gun, placed the barrel between two branches, and took deliberate aim at Djalma. Before my shouts could apprise him of his danger, the brave youth had received a ball in his breast. Feeling himself hit, he fell back involuntarily two paces, and dropped upon one knee ; but he still remained firm, endeavouring to cover me with his body. You may conceive my rage and despair, whilst all my efforts to disengage myself were paralysed by the excruciating pain in my thigh. Powerless and disarmed, I witnessed for some moments this unequal struggle.'

'Djalma was loosing blood rapidly ; his strength of arm began to fail him ; already one of the irregulars, inciting his comrades with his voice, drew from his belt a huge, heavy kind of bill-hook, when a dozen of our mountaineers made their appearance, borne towards the spot by the irresistible current of the battle. Djalma was rescued in his turn, I was released, and, in a quarter of an hour, I was able to mount a horse. The fortune of the day is ours, though with severe loss ; but the fires of the English camp are still visible, and tomorrow the conflict will be decisive. Thus, my beloved Eva, I owe my life to this youth. Happily, his wound occasions us no uneasiness ; the ball only glanced along the ribs in a slanting direction.'

'The brave boy might have said : "A blank wound," like the general,' observed Dagobert.

'Now, my dear Eva,' continued Rose, 'you must become acquainted, by means of this narrative at least, with the intrepid Djalma. He is but just eighteen. With one word, I will paint for you his noble and valiant nature ; it is a custom of this country to give surnames, and, when only fifteen, he was called "The Generous"—by which was, of course, meant generous in heart and mind. By another custom, no less touching than whimsical, this name has reverted to his parent, who is called "The Father of the Generous," and who

might, with equal propriety, be called "The Just," for this old Indian is a rare example of chivalrous honour and proud independence. He might, like so many other poor princes of this country, have humbled himself before the execrable despotism of the English, bargained for the relinquishment of sovereign power, and submitted to brute force—but it was not in his nature. "My whole rights, or a grave in my native mountains!"—such is his motto. And this is no empty boast: it springs from the conviction of what is right and just. "But you will be crushed in the struggle," I have said to him.—"My friend," he answered, "what if, to force you to a disgraceful act, you were told to yield or die?"—From that day I understood him, and have devoted myself, mind and body, to the ever sacred cause of the weak against the strong. You see, my Eva, that Djalma shows himself worthy of such a father. This young Indian is so proud, so heroic in his bravery, that, like a young Greek of Leonida's age, he fights with his breast bare; while other warriors of his country (who, indeed, usually have arms, breast, and shoulders uncovered) wear, in time of battle, a thick, impenetrable vest. The rash daring of this youth reminds me of Murat, King of Naples, who, I have so often told you, I have seen a hundred times leading the most desperate charges with nothing but a riding-whip in his hand.

'That's another of those kings I was telling you of, whom the Emperor set up for his amusement,' said Dagobert. 'I once saw a Prussian officer prisoner, whose face had been cut across by that mad-cap King of Naples' riding-whip; the mark was there, a black and blue stripe. The Prussian swore he was dishonoured, and that a sabre-cut would have been preferable. I should rather think so! That devil of a king; he only had one idea: "Forward, on to the cannon!" As soon as they began to cannonade, one would have thought the guns were calling him with all their might, for he was soon up to them with his "Here I am!" If I speak to you about him, my children, it's because he was fond of repeating; "No one can break through a square of infantry, if General Simon or I can't do it."'

Rose continued:

'I have observed with pain, that, notwithstanding his youth, Djalma is often subject to fits of deep melancholy. At times, I have seen him exchange with his father looks of singular import. In spite of our mutual attachment, I believe that both conceal from me some sad family secret, in so far as I can judge from expressions which have dropped from them by chance.

'It relates to some strange event, which their vivid imaginations have invested with a supernatural character.

'And yet, my love, you and I have no longer the right to smile at the credulity of others. I, since the French campaign, when I met with that extraordinary adventure, which, to this day, I am quite unable to understand—'

'This refers to the man who threw himself before the mouth of the cannon,' said Dagobert.

'And you,' continued the maiden, still reading, 'you, my dear Eva, since the visits of that young and beautiful woman, whom, as your mother asserted, she had seen at her mother's house forty years before.'

The orphans, in amazement, looked at the soldier.

'Your mother never spoke to me of that, nor the general either, my children; this is as strange to me as it is to you.'

With increasing excitement and curiosity, Rose continued:

'After all, my dear Eva, things which appear very extraordinary, may often be explained by a chance resemblance or a freak of nature. Marvels being always the result of optical illusion or heated fancy, a time must come, when that which appeared to be superhuman or supernatural, will prove to be the most simple and natural event in the world. I doubt not, therefore, that the things, which we denominate our prodigies, will one day receive this commonplace solution.'

You see, my children—things appear marvellous, which at bottom are quite simple—though for a long time we understand nothing about them.'

'As our father relates this, we must believe it, and not be astonished—eh, sister ?'

'Yes, truly—since it will all be explained one day.'

'For example,' said Dagobert, after a moment's reflection, 'you two are so much alike, that any one, who was not in the habit of seeing you daily, might easily take one for the other. Well ! if they did not know that you are, so to speak, "doubles," they might think an imp was at work instead of such good little angels as you are.'

'You are right, Dagobert ; in this way many things may be explained, even as our father says.' And Rose continued to read :

'Not without pride, my gentle Eva, have I learned that Djalma has French blood in his veins. His father married, some years ago, a young girl, whose family, of French origin, had long been settled at Batavia in the island of Java. This similarity of circumstances between my old friend and myself—for your family also, my Eva, is of French origin, and long settled in a foreign land—has only served to augment my sympathy for him. Unfortunately, he has long had to mourn the loss of the wife whom he adored.

'See, my beloved Eva ! my hand trembles as I write these words. I am weak—I am foolish—but, alas ! my heart sinks within me. If such a misfortune were to happen to me—Oh, my God !—what would become of our child without thee—without his father—in that barbarous country ? But no ! the very fear is madness ; and yet what a horrible torture is uncertainty ! Where may you now be ? What are you doing ? What has become of you ? Pardon these black thoughts, which are sometimes too much for me. They are the cause of my worst moments—for, when free from them, I can at least say to myself : I am proscribed, I am every way unfortunate—but, at the other end of the world, two hearts still beat for me with affection—yours, my Eva, and our child's !'

Rose could hardly finish this passage ; for some seconds her voice was broken by sobs. There was indeed a fatal coincidence between the fears of General Simon and the sad reality ; and what could be more touching than these outpourings of the heart, written by the light of a watch-fire, on the eve of battle, by a soldier who thus sought to soothe the pangs of a separation, which he felt bitterly, but knew not would be eternal ?

'Poor general ! he is unaware of our misfortune,' said Dagobert, after a moment's silence ; 'but neither has he heard that he has two children, instead of one. That will be at least some consolation. But come, Blanche ; do go on reading : I fear that this dwelling on grief fatigues your sister, and she is too much affected by it. Besides, after all, it is only just, that you should take your share of its pleasure and its sorrow.'

Blanche took the letter, and Rose, having dried her eyes, laid in her turn her sweet head on the shoulder of her sister, who thus continued :

'I am calmer now, my dear Eva ; I left off writing for a moment, and strove to banish those black presentiments. Let us resume our conversation ! After discoursing so long about India, I will talk to you a little of Europe. Yesterday evening, one of our people (a trusty fellow) rejoined our outposts. He brought me a letter, which had arrived from France at Calcutta ; at length, I have news of my father, and am no longer anxious on his account. This letter is dated in August of last year. I see by its contents, that several other letters, to which he alludes, have either been delayed or lost ; for I had not received any for two years before, and was extremely uneasy about him. But my excellent father is the same as ever ! Age has not weakened him ; his character is as energetic, his health as robust, as in times past—still a workman, still proud of his order, still faithful to his austere republican ideas, still hoping much.

'For he says to me, "the time is at hand," and he underlines those words. He gives me also, as you will see, good news of the family of old Dagobert, our friend—for in truth, my dear Eva, it soothes my grief to think, that this excellent man is with you, that he will have accompanied you in your exile—for I know him—a kernel of gold beneath the rude rind of a soldier! How he must love our child!'

'Here Dagobert coughed two or three times, stooped down, and appeared to be seeking on the ground the little red and blue check-handkerchief spread over his knees. He remained thus bent for some seconds, and, when he raised himself, he drew his hand across his moustache.

'How well father knows you!'

'How rightly has he guessed that you would love us!'

'Well, well, children; pass over that!—Let's come to the part where the general speaks of my little Agricola, and of Gabriel, my wife's adopted child. Poor woman! when I think that in three months perhaps—But come, child; read, read,' added the old soldier, wishing to conceal his emotion.

'I still hope against hope, my dear Eva, that these pages will one day reach you, and therefore I wish to insert in them all that can be interesting to Dagobert. It will be a consolation to him, to have some news of his family. My father, who is still foreman at Mr Haidy's, tells me that worthy man has also taken into his house the son of old Dagobert. Agricola works under my father, who is enchanted with him. He is, he tells me, a tall and vigorous lad, who wields the heavy forge-hamnet as if it were a feather, and is light-spirited as he is intelligent and laborious. He is the best workman on the establishment; and this does not prevent him in the evening, after his hard day's work, when he returns home to his mother, whom he truly loves, from making songs and writing excellent patriotic verses. His poetry is full of fire and energy; his fellow-workmen sing nothing else, and his lays have the power to warm the coldest and the most timid hearts.'

'How proud you must be of your son, Dagobert,' said Rose, in admiration; 'he writes songs.'

'Certainly, it is all very fine—but what pleases me best is, that he is good to his mother, and that he handles the hammer with a will. As for the songs, before he makes a "Rising of the People," or a "Marseillaise," he will have had to beat a good deal of iron; but where can this rascally sweet Agricola have learned to make songs at all?—No doubt, it was at school, where he went, as you will see, with his adopted brother Gabriel.'

At this name of Gabriel, which reminded them of the imaginary being whom they called their guardian angel, the curiosity of the young guls was greatly excited. With redoubled attention, Blanche continued in these words:

'The adopted brother of Agricola, the poor deserted child whom the wife of our good Dagobert so generously took in, forms, my father tells me, a great contrast with Agricola; not in heart, for they have both excellent hearts; but Gabriel is as thoughtful and melancholy as Agricola is lively, joyous, and active. Moreover, adds my father, each of them, so to speak, has the aspect which belongs to his character. Agricola is dark, tall, and strong, with a gay and bold air; Gabriel, on the contrary, is weak, fair, timid as a girl, and his face wears an expression of angelic mildness.'

The orphans looked at each other in surprise; then, as they turned towards the soldier their ingenuous countenances, Rose said to him: 'Have you heard, Dagobert? Father says, that your Gabriel is fair, and has the face of an angel. Why, 'tis exactly like ours!'

'Yes, yes, I heard very well; it is that which surprised me, in your dream.'

'I should like to know, if he has also blue eyes,' said Rose.

'As for that, my children, though the general says nothing about it, I will

answer for it : your fair boys have always blue eyes. But, blue or black, he will not use them to stare at young ladies ; go on, and you will see why.'

Blanche resumed :

'His face wears an expression of angelic mildness. One of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, where he went with Agricola and other children of his quarter, struck with his intelligence and good disposition, spoke of him to a person of consequence, who, becoming interested in the lad, placed him in a seminary for the clergy, and, since the last two years, Gabriel is a priest. He intends devoting himself to foreign missions, and will soon set out for America.'

'Your Gabriel is a priest, it appears?' said Rose, looking at Dagobert.

'While ours is an angel,' added Blanche.

'Which only proves that yours is a step higher than mine. Well, every one to his taste ; there are good people in all trades ; but I prefer that it should be Gabriel who has chosen the black gown. I'd rather see my boy with arms bare, hammer in hand, and a leathern apron round him, neither more nor less than your old grandfather, my children—the father of Marshal Simon, Duke of Ligny—for, after all, marshal and duke he is by the grace of the Emperor. Now finish your letter.'

'Soon, alas, yes !' said Blanche ; 'there are only a few lines left.' And she proceeded :

'Thus, my dear, loving Eva, if this journal should ever reach its destination, you will be able to satisfy Dagobert as to the position of his wife and son, whom he left for our sakes. How can we ever repay such a sacrifice? But I feel sure, that your good and generous heart will have found some means of compensation.

'Adieu !—Again adieu, for to-day, my beloved Eva ; I left off writing for a moment, to visit the tent of Djalma. He slept peacefully, and his father watched beside him ; with a smile, he banished my fears. This intrepid young man is no longer in any danger. May he still be spared in the combat of to-morrow ! Adieu, my gentle Eva ! the night is silent and calm ; the fires of the bivouac are slowly dying out, and our poor mountaineers repose after this bloody day ; I can hear, from hour to hour, the distant all's-well of our sentinels. Those foreign words bring back my grief ; they remind me of what I sometimes forget in writing—that I am far away, separated from you and from my child ! Poor, beloved beings ! what will be your destiny? Ah ! if I could only send you, in time, that medal, which, by a fatal accident, I carried away with me from Warsaw, you might, perhaps, obtain leave to visit France, or at least to send our child there with Dagobert ; for you know of what importance—But why add this sorrow to all the rest? Unfortunately, the years are passing away, the fatal day will arrive, and this last hope, in which I live for you, will also be taken from me : but I will not close the evening by so sad a thought. Adieu, my beloved Eva ! Clasp our child to your bosom, and cover it with all the kisses which I send to both of you from the depths of exile !

'Till to-morrow—after the battle !'

The reading of this touching letter was followed by a long silence. The tears of Rose and Blanche flowed together. Dagobert, with his head resting on his hand, was absorbed in painful reflections.

Without doors, the wind had now augmented in violence ; a heavy rain began to beat on the sounding panes ; the most profound silence reigned in the interior of the inn. But, whilst the daughters of General Simon were reading with such deep emotion these fragments of their father's journal, a strange and mysterious scene transpired in the menagerie of the brute-tamer.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CAGES.

MOROK had prepared himself. Over his deer-skin vest he had drawn the coat of mail—that steel tissue, as pliable as cloth, as hard as diamonds; next, clothing his arms and legs in their proper armour, and his feet in iron-bound buskins, and concealing all this defensive equipment under loose trousers and an ample pelisse carefully buttoned, he took in his hand a long bar of iron, white hot, set in a wooden handle.

Though long ago daunted by the skill and energy of the Prophet, his tiger Cain, his lion Judas, and his black panther Death, had sometimes attempted, in a moment of rebellion, to try their fangs and claws on his person; but, thanks to the armour concealed beneath his pelisse, they blunted their claws upon a skin of steel, and notched their fangs upon arms or legs of iron, whilst a slight touch of their master's metallic wand left a deep furrow in their smoking, shrivelled flesh.

Finding the inutility of their efforts, and endowed with strong memory, the beasts soon learned that their teeth and claws were powerless when directed against this invulnerable being. Hence, their terrified submission reached to such a point that, in his public representations, their master could make them crouch and cower at his feet by the least movement of a little wand covered with flame-coloured paper.

The Prophet, thus armed with care, and holding in his hand the iron made hot by Goliath, descended by the trap-door of the loft into the large shed beneath, in which were deposited the cages of his animals. A mere wooden partition separated this shed from the stable that contained his horses.

A lantern, with a reflector, threw a vivid light on the cages. They were four in number. A wide iron grating formed their sides, turning at one end upon hinges like a door, so as to give ingress to the animal; the bottom of each den rested on two axle-trees and four small iron castors, so that they could easily be removed to the large covered wagon in which they were placed during a journey. One of them was empty; the other three contained, as already intimated, a panther, a tiger, and a lion.

The panther, originally from Java, seemed to merit the gloomy name of Death, by her grim, ferocious aspect. Completely black, she lay crouching and rolled up in the bottom of her cage, and her dark hues mingling with the obscurity which surrounded her, nothing was distinctly visible but fixed and glaring eyes—yellow balls of phosphoric light, which only kindled, as it were, in the night-time; for it is the nature of all the animals of the feline species to enjoy entire clearness of vision but in darkness.

The Prophet entered the stable in silence: the dark red of his long pelisse contrasted with the pale yellow of his straight hair and beard; the lantern, placed at some height above the ground, threw its rays full upon this man, and the strong light, opposed to the deep shadows around it, gave effect to the sharp proportions of his bony and savage-looking figure.

He approached the cage slowly. The white rim, which encircled his eyeball, appeared to dilate, and his look rivalled in motionless brilliancy the steadily sparkling gaze of the panther. Still crouching in the shade, she felt already the fascination of that glance; two or three times she dropped her eyelids with a low, angry howl; then, reopening her eyes, as if in spite of herself, she kept them fastened immovably on those of the Prophet. And now her rounded ears clung to her skull, which was flattened like a viper's; the skin of her forehead became convulsively wrinkled; she drew in her hissing, but silky muzzle, and twice silently opened her jaws, garnished with formidable fangs. From that moment a kind of magnetic connection seemed to be established between the man and the beast.

The Prophet extended his glowing bar towards the cage, and said, in a sharp, imperious tone: 'Death! come here!'

The panther rose, but so dragged herself along that her belly and the bend of her legs touched the ground. She was three feet high, and nearly five in length; her elastic and fleshy spine, the sinews of her thighs as well developed as those of a race-horse, her deep chest, her enormous jutting shoulders, the nerve and muscle in her short, thick paws—all announced that this terrible animal united vigour with suppleness, and strength with agility.

Morok, with his lion wand still extended in the direction of the cage, made a step towards the panther. The panther made a stride towards the Prophet. Morok stopped; Death stopped also.

At this moment the tiger, Judas, to whom Morok's back was turned, bounded violently in his cage, as if jealous of the attention which his master paid to the panther. He growled hoarsely, and, raising his head, showed the under-part of his redoubtable triangular jaw, and his broad chest of a dirty white, with which blended the copper colour, streaked with black, of his sides; his tail, like a huge red serpent, with rings of ebony, now clung to his flanks, now lashed them with a slow and continuous movement; his eyes, of a transparent, brilliant green, were fixed upon the Prophet.

Such was the influence of this man over his animals, that Judas almost immediately ceased growling, as if frightened at his own temerity; but his respiration continued loud and deep. Morok turned his face towards him, and examined him very attentively during some seconds. The panther, no longer subject to the influence of her master's look, slunk back to crouch in the shade.

A sharp cracking, in sudden breaks, like that which great animals make in gnawing hard substances, was now heard from the cage of the lion. It drew the attention of the Prophet, who, leaving the tiger, advanced towards the other den.

Nothing could be seen of the lion but his monstrous croup of a reddish yellow. His thighs were gathered under him, and his thick mane served entirely to conceal his head. But by the tension and movement of the muscles of his loins, and the curving of his backbone, it was easy to perceive that he was making violent efforts with his throat and his forepaws. The Prophet approached the cage with some uneasiness, fearing that, notwithstanding his orders, Goliath had given the lion some bones to gnaw. To assure himself of it, he said in a quick and firm voice: 'Cain!'

The lion did not change his position.

'Cain! come here!' repeated Morok in a louder tone. The appeal was useless; the lion did not move, and the noise continued.

'Cain! come here!' said the Prophet a third time; but, as he pronounced these words, he applied the end of the glowing bar to the haunch of the lion.

Scarcely did the light track of smoke appear on the reddish hide of Cain, when, with a spring of incredible agility, he turned and threw himself against the grating, not crouching, but at a single bound—upright, superb, terrifying. The Prophet being at the angle of the cage, Cain, in his fury, had raised himself sideways to face his master, and, leaning his huge flank against the bars, thrust between them his enormous fore-leg, which, with his swollen muscles, was as large as Goliath's thigh.

'Cain! down!' said the Prophet, approaching briskly.

The lion did not obey immediately. His lips, curling with rage, displayed fangs as long, as large, and as pointed as the tusks of a wild boar. But Morok touched those lips with the end of the burning metal; and, as he felt the smart, followed by an unexpected summons of his master, the lion, not daring to roar, uttered a hollow growl, and his great body sank down at once in an attitude of submission and fear.

The Prophet took down the lantern to see what Cain had been gnawing. It